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**Are you ready? -**

**A readiness check of German  
primary schools for handling  
integration of refugee children**

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**B.Sc. Thesis**

**June 2016**

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## **ABSTRACT**

With the high influx of refugees into Germany, numerous children of mandatory school age enter the German education system. Successful accommodation and teaching is of vast importance for refugee children for it fosters their resilience and integration in the host country's society. Schools see themselves confronted with challenges related to the pupils' special needs and backgrounds. This research aims to assess the readiness of four German primary schools to integrate refugee children. Interviews with teachers and principals threw light on the presence and implementation or absence of factors thought to enhance their readiness to integrate. While all schools already had essential structures in place in order to handle refugee children, a general lack of materials, facilities and additional teaching and psychological personnel was observed. The expectation that a school's share of migrant pupils affects its readiness proved to hold only partially true since additional factors like committed school management, all-day schooling structures and general teacher motivation also tend to influence readiness.

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# 1 Introduction

## Contextual overview

People in numerous countries face violent conflicts and live in war zones. Being confronted with dangerous living conditions and the wish to save their lives and the ones of their family members, relatives and friends, millions decide to leave their home country in order to seek refuge and peace abroad. It became apparent that Europe is one of the main destinations for numerous refugees and also Germany turns into a host country being confronted with arrivals from a variety of countries, including Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. For most refugees, a return to their home in the near future seems unlikely which requires efforts and finding ways to integrate the newcomers into the German society. In 2015, about 325.000 (Vitzthum, 2016) refugee children entered Germany, either with their parents or unaccompanied. Taking care of the young arrivals who are, on the one hand, especially vulnerable but have, on the other hand, a lot of resilience, is crucial. A child's integration process usually begins with entering the education system where it first gets in touch with the language and culture of its new country of residence. The importance for newcomer children to attend a school is for example pointed out by Wilkinson (2002), Hek (2005), Rutter (2006) and Block (2014). The latter formulates it in the following way: "[school is] a critical site for promoting successful settlement outcomes and social inclusion" (Block et al. 2014). Not only is education a basic right, much more it helps establishing new routines, getting used to the new environment, circumstances, culture, way of life and the like. Also the UNESCO Declaration from Delhi reads: "education is, and must be, a societal responsibility, encompassing governments, families, communities and non-governmental organisations alike; it requires the commitment and participation of all, in a grand alliance that transcends diverse opinions and political positions" (Naidoo, 2013). The considerable proportion of minor children among the newcomers, social responsibility as well as the German legal requirement for all children of compulsory school age to attend school, suddenly necessitates for additional educational opportunities for asylum seeking and refugee children. In Germany, providing education is a matter with which each federal state deals in its own manner. Consequently, Germany-wide schools have come up with various ideas to cope with the influx of asylum seeker children into German schools. The recent problem, however, is that a majority of schools in Germany are neither per se prepared to take care, teach and integrate so many refugee children, nor have they (extensive) experience in doing so. Even if refugee children initially go to schools incorporated into asylum seekers centers, they will eventually join regular classes. Most of those children deal with various stressors which distinguish them from their native peers and which require not only special attention but an elaborated and structured course of action. For an affected school, the

teaching staff and pupils, treating refugee children means additional challenges and requirements that they have to meet in order to make the newcomers successfully integrate and adapt to the surroundings. Thus, schools do not only have to be conscious about the refugee children's backgrounds but also their own role and function as integration endorser as well as the related challenges and requirements. Scholars (Hek; Pastoor; Pinson & Arnot; Pugh) point out special and additional needs of kids with refugee background and research has also been conducted about the key role that primary, secondary and higher education play in fostering the integration of children and adolescents and by which means this can become successful.

However, even though various, topically related, studies were conducted and despite existing knowledge about what *could* be done to accommodate refugee children and obtain integration, no recent investigations were undertaken to examine German primary schools' readiness to integrate refugee children.

### Research question, relevance and literature contribution

This study thus aims to add to the literature by comparing German primary schools' readiness with regard to their existing competencies for integrating refugee children. Additionally, schools' ethnic pupil composition, in particular the share of migrant pupils, is added as a feature to explore for it repeatedly causes discussions in the educational sphere. Consequently, the research question reads:

**“To what extent are German primary schools ready to integrate refugee children?”**

Following sub-questions are asked:

- **How can readiness be defined?**
- **What do schools do to be ready?**
- **What are major difficulties of integrating refugee children?**
- **Is there a relationship between a school's share of migrant pupils and readiness?**

The underlying assumption estimates that schools are differently well prepared to teach and accommodate refugee children and that schools with a rather multicultural pupil population tend to be more ready to integrate refugee children. Those anticipations stem from the belief that, firstly, children with refugee background differ from those without refugee background and, secondly, from the expectation that schools which are already characterized by their

ethnic diverse children tend to have a more multicultural setting, including teaching and learning approaches, which benefits especially the needs of non-native children.

In search of accurate answers to the questions, primary school personnel from four primary schools was interviewed on the basis of questions that were designed by taking into account following underlying theoretical pillars: the theoretical knowledge about refugee stressors, needs and education and holistic education strategies. The theoretical elements are further explained in the course of the paper.

### Research relevance

This research is regarded to be of scientific relevance because so far scholars haven't explored yet in how far German primary schools actually employ means that are suggested in the literature about refugees and their education. The remarkable recent refugee situation which forced, and still forces, schools to quickly react to the new challenges may also reveal additional perspectives on more or less successful integration strategies and requirements. Investigating to which extent literature insights resemble the situations in practice and whether more or other integration and teaching strategies are applied by German primary schools is regarded to be a useful contribution. Also exploring whether schools' diverse pupil populations affect the schools' readiness can provide further insights for integration and education research.

Despite its small scale, from a perspective of social relevance, the study can be informative and valuable, with regard to the expected success of schooling refugee children. In general, policy makers, teachers and psychologists have to think about how to tailor the learning environments more closely to the various needs of all children, including the ones of refugee children, in the classroom. In the specific case study, the results can be seen as momentary inventory of the participating schools with regard to the challenges that come along with the arriving refugees. If low levels of readiness are detected, one has to think about changes, for instance by means of policy recommendations or guidelines, in order to accelerate the process of schools becoming ready for accommodating refugee children. The acculturation model stresses the need for reciprocal interaction of newcomer and host society in order to effectively enable integration processes. In the event of research results showing a rather high level of readiness, one can formulate good practice examples to be shared with other schools in order to foster their development as well. By interviewing school personnel and discussing the topic with them, their perception of measures which could possibly be taken by their school may also broaden and raise awareness for fields that haven't been considered yet.

In the following, a conceptualization of key terms and concepts will be added, continued by an outline of the theoretical framework of holistic inclusive education models and insights on experiences of refugees and their education. The study's research design and implementation will be described, followed by the presentation, analysis and discussion of the case study's results. The document will also point out limitations of the study and suggestions for further research. Finally, policy recommendation for schools, local authorities and educational policy makers round off the paper.

## 2 Conceptualization of terms and concepts

### Refugee children

Hereafter, a refugee is defined, according to the definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, as a person who "owing to well-founded fear being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UNHCR, 2010). For the German law also requires children of asylum seekers of mandatory school age to attend school, this group of newcomers is included in the term 'refugees' in this paper as well. With the expression 'refugee children', it is consequently referred to children with refugee or asylum-seeker background who fled, accompanied by of one or several adults or on their own, their country of nationality or previous residence.

### Readiness

How can readiness be defined?

Since the research is about exploring the readiness of German primary schools, an explanation of what readiness is supposed to mean is provided. An explicit, existing definition for "readiness" in the context of schools' competency for integrating refugee children could not be found; the general meaning of readiness, however, is of use and can be customized. Readiness is the

"state of preparedness of persons, systems, or organizations to meet a situation and carry out a planned sequence of actions. Readiness is based on thoroughness of the planning, adequacy and training of the personnel, and supply and reserve of support services or systems" (WebFinance, 2016).



Translating and applying this definition onto the research frame, school principals, teachers and additional school personnel correspond to 'persons', the schools equate to 'organizations' and the aspired integration competency for newcomer refugee children resembles meeting 'a situation'. In order to adjust the above mentioned 'thoroughness of the planning, adequacy and training of the personnel and supply and reserve of services and systems' to the particular research case, the educational, emotional, supportive needs of refugee children are summarized by means of existing literature and knowledge insights. Investigating in how far the planning in and of schools is linked to the features of refugee children, in how far teachers are trained for pupils with limited language skills or traumata and in how far schools are part of systems with external community institutions shall result in a comparative assessment about the respective readiness of German primary schools.

## Integration

### Integration as aspect in the acculturation model

According to Berry, acculturation is a process "by which individuals [...] experience behavioural or attitude changes due to immersion in a different culture" (Berry, 2005). During acculturation, people take an active part in intercultural contact which results in the question how peoples with varying cultural backgrounds confront the other ones, how they (try to) find ways of reciprocal understanding, "negotiate on their initial positions, and achieve some degree of harmonious engagement" (Berry, 2005). Integration is one of four acculturation strategies and defines the interest to participate in and live the own culture as well as the new culture to a similar extent. The non-dominant groups can, however, only independently and successfully opt for this strategy if mutual accommodation is provided. Mutual refers to the acceptance of both groups, dominant and non-dominant, that different peoples can live in their different cultures. It is required that newcomers with distinct cultural habits "adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living in the plural society" (Berry, 2005).

Conducted research in this field has also shown that ensuing integration is, in terms of acculturative stress, least stressful, related to better health conditions and results in better forms of adaptation (Berry, 2005). Such findings led to the general impression that "those who pursue integrative strategies (in terms of attitudes, identities and behaviors) will achieve better adaptations" (Berry, 2005).

Schools seem to be places where those processes can get started and should take place. Especially educational institutions which deal with a variety of cultural backgrounds, languages and nationalities are expected to resemble a society which takes steps to “support the continuation of cultural diversity as a shared communal resource” (Berry, 2005) from which refugees could benefit because their otherness would not be regarded as such but rather as valuable contribution to the mixed classroom. Those features define an environment which cherishes cultural pluralism, including a positive multicultural ideology (Berry, 2005).

### The indicators of integration framework

Since the underlying research question asks about the readiness of schools to integrate refugee children, a definition of what is understood as elements of integration is required. Here, the indicators of integration, as they were presented in a study’s final report of Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh, were chosen to inform the underlying research context of exploring primary schools.

The framework’s structure contains ten key domains. A domain can be regarded as a category in the life of refugees which is of central

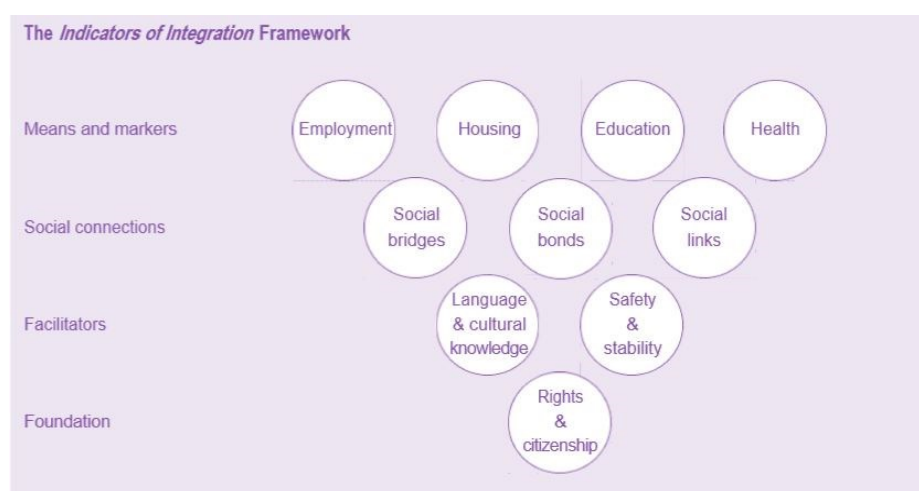


FIGURE 1 THE INDICATORS OF INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

importance for their integration: Employment, housing, education, health, social bridges, social bonds, social links, language& cultural knowledge, safety& stability and rights & citizenship. For each domain around ten assessment indicators are recommended. Education is grouped under the heading ‘means and markers’ meaning that it is a domain in which success is indicating positive integration achievements and likely to foster the wider action of integration. Hence, success in one of the four ‘means and markers’ - domains (Employment, Housing, Education, Health) is not only a consequence of integration but can also serve as means to that goal. Since schools should also provide (mental) health aid to their refugee pupils, the domain ‘health’ is also considered to be crucial in the study at hand. While the means and markers- domains are often of publicly visible and of comparative character, domains under the heading ‘social connections’ focus especially on various forms of social relationships that may be less visible but not less important to integration. Social bonds refer to “connections within a community

defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity” (Ager & Strang, 2008), social bridges aim to define connections with members of other communities and social links point at connections with “institutions, including local and central government services” (Ager & Strang, 2008). Schools, at best, encourage successful and fruitful integration in all three ‘social connections’ domains. Language and cultural knowledge and safety and stability belong to the heading ‘facilitators’ and report key factors for ameliorating integration processes and success. At the school level, these domains are likely to be pursued and therefore contributing to the refugee pupils’ integration process. Lastly, the domain ‘rights and citizenship’ represents “the basis upon which expectations and obligations for the process of integration are established” (Ager & Strang, 2008). The framework’s authors stress that the graphical presentation shall not indicate a hierarchy of domains, meaning that no category is more important than another or that integration needs to follow a particular order (Ager & Strang, 2008). In fact, it should help to realize the range of connecting paths between the different domains.

Block et al. (2014) stress that schools do not only function as knowledge-providing institutions, though this is their primary function, but should take measures to fostering integration and provide care. Hence, the ‘indicators of integration’- framework gives a concise overview of the ten domains where integration can be found, emphasized and experienced. The previously given outline showed the domains which shall be taken into account when analyzing schools’ readiness to integrate.

### 3 Theoretical framework and literature review

The following theory component is built upon two theoretical pillars. Firstly, the ideas behind multicultural and holistic or inclusive education models, mainly brought forward by Block and Arnot and Pinson, are presented. Such models offer possibilities to foster integration and care in an educational setting. Secondly, a collection of requirements that are in particular related to accommodating refugee children in schools (Hek; McBrien; Pastoor; Pinson & Arnot; Pugh) is outlined, since it is the refugee’s escape and its associated consequences that distinguishes them most from other immigrant and native pupils and which are therefore crucial criteria for investigating schools’ readiness to integrate refugee children.

#### 3.1 Holistic education model

In the school setting newly arrived refugee children can be expected trying “to adapt and conform to a new environment” (UNHCR, 1994) since it facilitates the process of making friends and develop a feeling of belonging. At the same time, they will probably cling to their

native culture because that is how they grew up and how their parents live and brought them up. A child's integration is only possible if the school allows to hold on to some extent to own typical cultural habits and understanding instead of expecting to abandon ethnic characteristics. To realize this in the educational sphere, it can be best achieved by applying a holistic model of education 'which recognizes and addresses the multiple and complex learning and social and emotional needs of asylum-seeker and refugee-background students' (Block et al., 2014). Like previously mentioned, this perception sees schools not only as knowledge-providing institutions, despite this is their primary goal, but as bodies which should take measures to foster integration and provide care. Nwosu (2014) and her colleague point at their findings which

“suggest that multicultural teaching, curricula, and programmes, spearheaded by ethnically diverse personnel, promote academic adjustment for refugee students by fostering appreciation for cultural diversity, positive ethnic identity development, and agency” (Nwosu & Barnes, 2014).

With regard to the sample schools, one expects to see a rather multicultural approach at the schools with a higher share of migrant background pupils, leading to the question whether there is a relationship between ethnic diverse pupil population and the readiness to integrate refugee children.

### 3.2 Literature findings about refugee stressors, needs and education

The following theory component informs about three areas: First of all, it needs to become clear how important going to school for refugee children and adolescents is, thus stressing the schools' position in the integration process. Secondly, one gets to know the special position of refugee children in the classroom and the school setting as well as to which difficulties and challenges this can lead for schools, staff and pupils. Thirdly, a collection of particular needs of newly arrived refugees is prepared because those define the knowledge and requirements which the schools need to have and meet and which, consequently, lead to factors that determine the readiness of schools to integrate.

#### 3.2.1 Importance of school & schools' position in the integration process

The UNHCR declared education not only as a fundamental human right but also an “essential component of refugee children's rehabilitation” (McBrien, 2005). Education is relevant for the reconstruction of both social and emotional healing. Schools are of great importance because of their role in assisting socialization, integration and rehabilitation processes after refugee children's arrival in a new country (Pastoor, 2015). Inspired by researcher Antonovsky, schools can be seen as salutogenic arenas, meaning that they foster health and well-being and

bring back some coherence to the children's lives. Schools have the possibility to re-establish safety and predictability (Pastoor, 2015), can contribute to gain again the feeling of belonging and "promote social and emotional development, structure and routine" (Hek, 2005). Especially developing a feeling of belonging is crucial for the process of settlement. Furthermore, education assists children with refugee background, as well as their families, to learn and understand the country's language and system and foster social inclusion (Hek, 2005; Block et al., 2014). Block and colleagues (2014) remind that schools are in a major position when it comes to address matters like social exclusion, mental health problems and poor educational outcomes. When successfully participating in education, which takes place in a supportive setting, one can expect to see improvements in children's self-esteem, social inclusion, as well as in their resilience and potential. It can be increasingly built upon skills and strengths and pathways for potential future in education and employment may be created (Block et al., 2014). Also Cecile Rousseau and her colleague refer to schools' key roles, one being a mediator in order to assist children and young adults to adapt to the life in their host country and the second being a "main access point to prevention and treatment services for mental health problems" (Rousseau & Guzder, 2008). By establishing effective home-school liaisons, parental engagement and support can be achieved more easily. Connections with the children's home do not only benefit the pupils but also help the school staff to better understand by what concerns and interests refugees are occupied and which particular needs they have (Hughes, 2007).

### 3.2.2 Special position of refugee children

Pastoor (2015) stresses that even though refugee children formally belong to the group of 'language minority students', there is the need to distinguish between refugee children's educational and psychological needs from those kids who have a different mother tongue but were born and raised in the particular host country. Pastoor calls for a "more complex representation of 'refugee children'" (Pastoor, 2015) yet without regarding refugees as a homogenous group. They may share certain experiences related to their flight and the fact that they lost their home but differ with regard to, for instance, health conditions, prior education experiences, family situation, expectations and the ability to get used to the new circumstances and dealing with what happened in the past (Pastoor, 2015; Hek, 2005). In addition, children with refugee background face more challenges, for example interrupted or minimal education prior to their arrival, disruption of their family bonds, insecure housing and poor living conditions, confrontation with negative stereotypes and discrimination (Block et al., 2014). Like already stated, refugee children differ in their impaired psychological functioning, some are highly traumatized by what they were exposed to, while others are less. Due to the

human's ability to suppress painful experiences and switch to something like a survival mode, sometimes it also becomes apparent only later, and when the children regained some kind of stability and rest, to which extent they already dealt with their refugee past and in how far they show symptoms of trauma (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015). Traumatized children can be affected by a variety of behavioral patterns. "Social withdrawal and regressive behaviours, hyperarousal or dissociation, flashbacks, aggression, inability to concentrate, attachment difficulties, memory difficulties, sleep disturbances, feelings of guilt, depression, [...] anxiety disorders" (Block et al., 2014) are possible reactions just like behaving happy or carefree (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015). Many symptoms can result from post-traumatic stress disorders, yet, it is called for considering psychologic stress caused by post-migration issues, like a cultural shock and the sudden change of living situation and quality. Rutter illustrates that "speech delay and associated cognitive difficulties" (Rutter, 2006) may be observed with refugee children.

Having children with a refugee background in mainstream classes often intensifies the teachers' job because they are likely to be confronted with a variety of additional tasks. Refugee children's parents may (temporarily) not be capable of meeting their parental responsibilities and consciously or unconsciously forward them to the teachers (Perumal, 2015). Refugee children experience sometimes a so called 'generation conflict'. Since children are usually faster in language acquisition than their parents they often need to translate for their parents in various everyday situations. This means that children are confronted with responsibilities and tasks which are usually up to their parents. Here, the situation is comparable with a reversed shift in roles, potentially leading to identity confusion and conflicts between parents and children (McBrien, 2005).

In the classroom, it can also come to misunderstandings between refugee children and teachers due to culturally different rules of conduct (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015). Courtesies rules like making eye contact, shaking hands, physical proximity and distance, or dealing with authorities, institutions or peers may vary a lot, too.

### 3.2.3 Particular needs of refugee children and effective approaches to teaching and caring

Research in this field outlines several key themes of particular needs of refugee children. In the following section the detected needs are assigned to the ten dimensions of the earlier presented integration indicator framework. In addition, the following part will contain aspects and practices brought forward by scholars in order to assist refugee children's education and

integration in schools. This segment closes with a summarizing list of factors which possibly facilitate refugee child integration and enhance schools' readiness.

Rachel Hek and Perumal point in their studies at conditions for successful teaching and learning. For Rachel Hek (2005) those are home-school liaison, support and specialist teachers, learning the language, emotional support, whole-school attitude, good welcome, anti-bullying ethos and support from friends. Perumal's study of an assisting programs for schools in South Africa suggests following aspects:

“positive teacher dispositions towards the students, styling a repertoire of teaching strategies customized to the needs of individual students, celebrating a multilingual and multicultural environment, [...] conducting holiday tutoring programmes facilitated by teachers and volunteers, forging school-community partnerships, [...] planning opportunities for the school community to participate in creative and expressive extra-curricular activities” (Perumal, 2015).

The ministry of education in British Columbia features aspects about a learning environment in their guide for schools and teachers. Mentioned factors related to social and school adjustment, physical needs, teachers' preparedness and instructions will also inform this paper's theory section.

## **Education Domain**

### *Teaching staff*

Studies revealed that support teachers who share a linguistic background and who are familiar with the children's cultural rooting can be of huge value for refugee children's settlement process at school. Pupils stated that they felt especially safe and welcome (Hek, 2005). Karin Pugh and her colleagues (2012) state in one of their work: “The more people that we have are native speakers of these languages, that can link with these kids, the better the start to their education is going to be” (Pugh, 2012). And Perumal (2015) stresses supportive and empathetic traits of teachers who encourage friendships of multicultural and multilingual character, support creative expression and have a respectful attitude towards diversity.

### *Teaching in mainstream classes*

Despite refugee pupils are oftentimes taught in separate classes first, refugee youth interviewed by Hek (2005) stated that not being able to attend mainstream education would reduce their success in settlement. From the perspective of the indigenous population it also becomes more difficult to learn about the lives and experiences of the newcomers and to

challenge stereotypes and prejudices that may have previously developed (Hek, 2005). Perumal conducted interviews with refugee children as well. She states that the wish to go to school and to acquire more knowledge was a repetitive feature of the conversations. Many refugee children are very much focused on the future and hold high engagement and career aspirations (Perumal, 2015).

### *Teaching materials*

Since refugee children who enter school in their new host country cannot be expected to speak the language it is important for schools to have teaching materials which are adapted to initial language gaps and comprehensible and accessible for the newcomers (Ministry of State for Children, 2004).

### *Knowledge about teaching refugees*

From Block et al.'s study it was reported that schools often have "little or no knowledge of where to seek help when required or of the breadth of support available" (Block et al., 2014). Also it is necessary for teachers to understand refugees' heterogeneity and different backgrounds meaning that educational and health care offers need to be flexible and must not resemble a one-size-fits-all model. Awareness that refugee pupils require additional support and that adequate schooling includes adapting their instructions should prevail among teachers, too. of refugees with empathy for the children and their families as well as the need to remove barriers to participation and success. Teaching with the belief that there are no foreigners in education, that, however, refugee children, even more than others, have a need for "dialogical social atmosphere, for personalized curriculum, for human dignity and cultural diversity" (Dvir, Aloni, & Harari, 2015), is of great relevance.

## **Health Domain**

### *Psychological Care*

Refugee children may have witnessed death, cruelty and violence and have to navigate the challenges of settling in a new country and often depend on adults around them to detect their mental health distress and to help them in receiving appropriate support (Fazel, Doll, & Stein, 2009). Fazel et al. (2009) refer to studies which "have consistently shown that a substantial proportion of children and adolescents meet criteria for emotional or behavioural psychopathology" (Fazel et al., 2009). School-based health services are being suggested as an alternative option to external and clinic-based services. When refugees built trustful relationships with schools, this can help to win the support of the parents to follow the school's



recommendation about consulting psychological aid (Fazel et al., 2009). The researchers state the necessity to “move to collaborative, community, integrated and multiagency models of care that address issues from child, parent and neighbourhood perspectives” (Fazel et al., 2009). Pastoor (2015) does not see the teacher in the role of a therapist, but being aware when refugee children have to be referred for psychological help services. The authors from the British Columbia guide for teachers and schools also suggest a team approach for teachers since most of them are not sufficiently trained to support pupils with processing, for instance, traumata (*Students from Refugee Backgrounds: a Guide for Teachers and Schools*, 2009)

## **Social Bridges Domain**

### *Mentoring structures*

Children who grew up in or experienced periods of disruption and displacement may have missed and thus lack basic or advanced skills of socialization. Matching children to contact persons, for example class mates or peers, could help the newly arrived child to understand its new life conditions and to manage the faced transition process (Pastoor, 2015).

### *Home-school liaison*

Home-school liaisons are important to connect the school with the pupils' homes which helps to explain and encourage the parents to access support (Hek, 2005). Schools can take several measures to achieve such engagement. By assisting parents with advice, information, translation or explanations about their rights and, if necessary accompanying them to appointments or helping them to register for language courses, they are likely to have more energy left for supporting their children emotionally and practically. Many parents may not know how the education system in the new country works and may also be suspicious of school authorities (Hughes, 2007). Here, building trust relationships and assuring the confidentiality of all data shared with the school can help (Ministry of State for Children, 2004). Kind repetitive invitations to visit the school and to talk to teachers can help to reduce initial skepticism and to establish foundations of trust and functioning home-school liaisons. A better connection to refugee children's parents also enables the school staff to have a better access to learning about individual needs and concerns. Information about rules, specific requirements of the school, including homework policies and teaching styles, should be shared in a translated version with parents. In order to avoid enforcing a generation conflict between pupils and parents, schools should not be in need to ask children to translate between teachers or school personnel and parents, especially when teachers talk about the child's well-

being, behavior or difficulties at school. Hence, having access to translators or translation services is crucial. Extra-curricular activities to which parents could be invited to, depending on the language level, tell traditional stories or teach songs are a good way to include parents into the school community while at the same time sharing their own culture and create understanding among others. Furtherance of parental participation at school festivities should be employed, generally it is suggested to differentiate very little between native and refugee parents. However, understanding for initial reserve or rejection is necessary due to its likely occurrence (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015). Several parents with refugee background feel ashamed of currently faced problems or insecurities. Many mothers and fathers also compose over other useful and singular skills which can enrich the school. Parents need to be shown that they are not only welcomed to play a positive role in their children's education but, more than that, namely that they are appreciated and seen as partners (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015).

### **Social Links Domain & Social Bonds Domain**

Literature stresses the importance for the refugee child to maintain contact and relationships to its own community and often, the closest representation of the community is the family (UNHCR, 1994). Schools can help the refugees' families, and especially the parents, to establish connections to the wider community. Refugee pupils' parents can regain control over their lives again which can help to increase their self-esteem again. Building social bonds also means that refugee children should be encouraged to preserve their mother tongue. At regular schools, special provisions shall be undertaken in order to give them the opportunity to, for instance, become literate in their mother tongue (UNHCR, 1994).

### **Language and Cultural Knowledge Domain**

In the context of "learning the language", as pointed out by Rachel Hek (2005), it is relevant to realize that various literature contributions mentions the pertinence of promoting the children's use of their native language. Understanding contents and tasks enables them to do well in subjects and feel more confident. Davies (2008) mentions a language- rich learning environment as one of the influencing factors determining how well refugee pupils perform in the educational sphere. In order to learn the host country's language, in particular for the sake of getting a better feeling for the new language's sound, the Dutch education and advising institution CED groep recommends to include various rhymes and music (CED, 2016). Whiteman (2005) writes about schools in which newcomers are paired up with fellow students who speak the same language and can thus assist the new classmate when understanding

issues occur. For that reason, it is helpful to find out right in the beginning which language is spoken in the child's home. Instructions and explanations can alternatively also be displayed in the child's mother tongue and objects in the classroom respectively signed and labelled, therefore taking into account the importance of encouraging the child to not abandon its first language while also giving the opportunity to improve in and learn the new language. Due to the recommended language- rich environment teachers are advised to teach common children songs in various languages in order to encourage bilingualism (Ministry of State for Children, 2004). Maintaining one's first language is a precondition for identity awareness and the avoidance of feeling non-belonging (UCLA, 2011).

Suggestions to appropriately deal with cultural diversity especially suggest acquaintance of concise knowledge about the children's countries of origin. This may include reasons for flight, culturally unique rules of conduct and courtesies, religion, school, educational and belief systems. Children in the class shall be made familiar not only with the national rules and ways of living but also with other representing cultural features. Recommended is also the use of toys and books from several ethnic groups presenting everyday items which can be found in any civilization, for example cooking, family live or shopping. Schools could acquire bilingual books or dolls with different skin colors. Attention needs to paid, however, in order to avoid possible perpetuation of stereotypes, prejudices and bias (Ministry of State for Children, 2004). Shireen Maged (2013) refers to recent studies which highlight the need for (prospective) teachers to critically analyze and reflect on themselves with regard to own cultural assumptions or racist traits. Deliberate engagement with the areas like "culture, ethnicity, race, class and socio-economic oppression to gain an in-depth understanding of cultural diversity" (Maged, 2013) is suggested as well.

### **Safety and Stability Domain**

Sufficient and appropriate emotional support is among the most important factors to help children and youth to assist the settlement process and to do well (Hek, 2005). Many children are ashamed of their sorrow or sadness and don't openly reveal their feelings. They need to be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and feelings, but without pushing them to do so or putting them under pressure. Furthermore, Hek (2005) explains, potential distress has to be recognized and understood by people who can then help to get back a feeling of stability within the new environments. Since refugee children and adolescents talked about negative consequences for their well-being when teachers didn't succeed to listen and take concerns seriously, it is important to raise awareness for such issues and situations.

### *Warm welcome and getting to know school*

The need to ensure that refugee children, especially when they enter the school during a school year, experience a warm and good welcome is also continuously highlighted in the existing literature (Hek; Ministry of State for Children; Perumal). Protecting, helping and warmly welcoming refugees shall not be regarded as negative duty but rather as a precondition for assisting them in successfully settling (Perumal, 2015). Introducing the newly arrived refugee children to the school, classrooms, and assigning them to mentors is suggested, too (*Students from Refugee Backgrounds: a Guide for Teachers and Schools*, 2009).

### *School rules and guidelines*

Also, schools should have clear policies addressing bullying which need to be known and executed by the whole school. Equally important in schools with refugee children is to promote a setting of justice and fairness which enables refugee pupils to understand that teachers neither favor nor disadvantage them, especially with regard to reactions to their behavior.

### *Structures and Routines*

A school's most important achievement is considered to provide refugee children and youth a safe place. Affected children need to rely on an environment which counteracts their insecurity, loss of structure and home. The need for confrontation with solid, structured though sensitive daily routines is highlighted in the refugee literature (Hek, 2005; UNHCR, 1994). Even though fully reconstructing normality is impossible, it is still feasible to help making the children's life as predictable and stable as possible. When young refugees realize that positive things such as going to school or playing happen to them on a daily basis, they can benefit from some psychological security. Predictability also refers to clear rules in the classroom; some pupils may have experienced more authoritarian education methods and are not used to the rather partner-like relationship between pupils and teachers. Boundaries and rather strict pedagogical guidance help newcomers to develop stability and behavioral safety (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015).

### *Emotional Care*

In the literature it is repeatedly referred to the need of refugee children to develop trustful relationships, for example to teachers. Such relationships and interpersonal connections foster the human's ability for resilience (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015).

### *Antidiscrimination and anti-racism*

McBrien pointed out in his work that discrimination was found to be “the greatest barrier to adaptation” (McBrien, 2005). In order to avoid that pupils experience obstructive consequences for their “self-perceptions, social interactions, motivation and achievement” (McBrien, 2005), schools should apply strict antidiscrimination and antiracism rules.

### **Employment and Housing Domain**

Even though it may indirectly affect the children’s integration process if their parents get employed in the new country of residence, it is nonetheless somewhat less related to the topic and the underlying research frame. For reasons of completeness the employment dimension is listed anyways.

With regard to the housing domain, UNHCR (1994) explains that assisting families to strive “for durable solutions and establish normal conditions” (UNHCR, 1994) can help to prevent further distress.

### **Whole-school attitude and approach**

Promoting a whole-school attitude is particularly characterized by the undertaken effort of recognizing and addressing “the multiple and complex learning and social and emotional needs” (Block et al., 2014) of pupils while, for instance, maintaining links with the pupils’ homes, local agencies and the surrounding community.

### **Teachers’ perceptions of their own role and associations with refugee children**

Even though it may be natural to hold certain assumptions about refugees, teachers need to make sure that they treat each child as an individual, don’t generalize (Hek, 2005) and avoid giving in to the tendency to “mask individuals, and denude them of their uniqueness, experiences, skills and talents” (Perumal, 2015). Reacting to newcomers, who are often regarded as strangers, should happen within the frame of hospitality. Promoting a view of refugees which stresses their abilities and contributions to a community, city and nation, rather than looking at them solely as recipients of, for instance, social benefits, is of great importance.

Teachers who are more or less unexpectedly confronted with refugee children in their classes, could feel incapable of adequately taking care of those new class members without losing track on the other pupils. Consequently, it is crucial for them to understand that it is not their

task to diagnose psychological pains and distresses of their pupils, neither do they have to treat traumata or teach the new language in the shortest time (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015).

The underlying hypothesis, taking into account the previously outlined factors, assumes that the more factors schools employ, the more ready to successfully integrate children in the primary school setting. A summary is provided below in table 1.

Domain	Sub-domain
<b>Education</b>	Foreign teaching personnel
	Teaching in intensive courses and teaching German
	Teaching in mainstream classes
	Teaching materials
	Knowledge about teaching refugees
<b>Health</b>	Psychological Care
<b>Social Bridges</b>	Mentoring systems
	Home-school-liaison
<b>Social Links</b>	Cooperation and community involvement
<b>Social Bonds</b>	Mother tongue education & distinct religious education
<b>Language and Cultural Knowledge</b>	Knowledge acquisition about refugees
	Translation means
	Interest in refugees' language and culture
	Celebrating and teaching multiculturalism
<b>Safety &amp; Stability</b>	Warm welcome and getting to know school
	School rules and guidelines
	Structures & Routines
	Emotional care

	Anti-discrimination / Anti-racism
<b>Rights and Citizenship</b>	
<b>Employment</b>	
<b>Housing</b>	
<b>Whole-school attitude and approach</b>	Considering school's importance for integration process
<b>Perceptions and Associations about refugees</b>	Generally positive associations with refugee children
	Reacting to residents' antipathy/ reluctance

TABLE 1 FACTORS EXPECTED TO FACILITATE INTEGRATION AND READINESS

## 4 Methodology

In order to find out about the primary schools' readiness to integrate refugee children, it was chosen for a cross-sectional research design. This entails measuring all units, and the involved variables, one time and without making use of manipulating pre- and post-tests. The unit of analysis is '(German primary) schools' and the school personnel which was interviewed to obtain the relevant information are the units of observation. Concerning the setting, it can be differentiated between the geographical setting, namely 'Germany' and the temporal one which is '2016'.

### Case selection and sampling

The case selection, thus the selection of primary schools, was limited to schools in the German federal states of North-Rhine Westphalia and Hesse. According to a distribution formula for registering asylum seekers, known as the "Königsteinerschlüssel", North-Rhine Westphalia has to accept the largest share (21,21%) and Hesse the fifth largest (7,35%) (BAMF, 2016). Even though it is not certain that all asylum procedures will result in refugee statuses or that refugees will actually stay in the particular state, the distribution formula nevertheless serves as a point of orientation about the amount of newcomers in a state. Regarding the population share with migration background, North-Rhine Westphalia (24,5%) and Hesse (25,5%) are very similar (Destatis, 2011). Furthermore, schools' characteristics in terms of its pupil

population as well as all-day schooling services were taken into account. Information thereon was retrieved from publicly available information on the schools' website, the internet or later through the interviews. Despite the fact that the number of schools in North-Rhine Westphalia outnumbers the one from Hesse, it is not expected to negatively impact the results since the research is not about a comparison between two federal states. Moreover, the theoretical framework seems to be independent from the schools' geographical setting. Due to the location in the same federal state, the three schools in North-Rhine Westphalia are affected by the same educational policies.

The process of finding schools interested in participating in the research was complicated by several reasons. Most schools were busily preparing the last weeks of school before the start of the summer vacation which includes exceptionally many activities. Other schools didn't see a relevance for them to participate in the study, for instance because they don't teach and accommodate refugee children yet. Moreover, the interest in the topic of refugees in combination with schools is wide and leaves investigating students, researchers and media representatives in a situation of concurrence.

### Data collection

It was opted for self-selected cases and hence for working with original, qualitative data. Qualitative research is associated with social research usually conducted in the field meaning in the place where "the subjects normally conduct their interviews" (Dooley, 2009). The results from qualitative research are analyzed without making use of statistics. Hence, instead of presenting numerous figures and statistics of results, qualitative research reads more like a story. For the underlying research aim, qualitative research also seems to be fitting because "it describes social process from the point of view of particular actors rather than testing general causal claims" (Dooley, 2009).

The choice for conducting interviews was based on the perception that interviews allow for rephrasing, further explanations and follow-up questions during the conversation. Since the addressed issue is a sensitive one which is likely to bring forward, especially among teaching staff, worries, complaints, hopes or other emotions, a conversation in person was deemed adequate. However, due to geographic distance and logistic complication, two interviews had to be conducted via phone and three on the basis of a questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with school principals, regular teachers, and, in three cases, with teachers for German as a second/foreign language. Those persons, as representatives and experts of their schools, are the ones from whom one can best retrieve information about the general school



management, teaching practices, experiences as well as assessments with teaching and accommodating refugee children. In total, data from eight school staff members was retrieved.

The design of the interview questions is premised on the existing literature on refugee and asylum seeker children education, British Columbia's guide by the ministry of education and the previously presented integration indicator framework. Questions were grouped into following categories: information about the school, refugee children thematic, education, mental health, social bridges, social links with and within the school, (mutual) language and cultural acquisition, safety and security and assessments regarding teaching of refugee children. They were asked in an open, semi-open and closed manner, depending on the particular content of each question. Conducted interviews lasted between 45 and 120 minutes and questions for the principal, mainstream teachers and teachers for German as foreign/second language varied slightly due to queries targeted at the teaching styles in class. At the two schools where only teachers (school 1 and 2) participated and gave an interview, few questions from the principal questions set were included. A translated version of the questions asked is added in appendix A.

Establishing contact with the schools happened via E-Mails, phone calls or personal visits during which the research topic and goal as well as the request for participation was outlined. All schools were offered to receive the questions in advance and assured that data retrieved from the interviews and about the schools in general is treated anonymously and confidentially. The interview partners gave their permission to record the conversations meaning that next to the written interview summaries also audio files exist. Since the conversational language was German, the interviews' content was summed up in English and can be found in appendix B.

## Participants

Interviews were held with four primary schools which are henceforth referred to school 1 to 4 and whose characteristics are shortly presented.

School 1 is located in a migrant rich neighborhood of a large city in the federal state of Hesse. Currently, 50 teachers educate the approximately 400 pupils representing between 18 and 20 nationalities. More than 90 percent of the children have a migration background. Next to Bulgarian pupils, the school teaches also refugee children from Somalia and since recently six refugee pupils from Syria.

School 2 is located in a rather small city in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Currently, 320 pupils attend the school and are taught by 22 teachers. The pupils have up to 15 different nationalities and 48 percent stem from a family with migration background. Currently, 12 refugee pupils from Syria, Rumania and Albania attend the school.

School 3 is located in a medium sized, multicultural city in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Currently, approximately 190 children are taught by 13 primary school teachers. Special pedagogues, educational pedagogues, educators and a family care worker add to the school's team. Between 10 and 15 nationalities are represented and more than 80 percent of the pupils have a migration background. At the moment, the school educates 19 foreign pupils of whom 13 stem from countries in war: ten pupils left Syria and three the Iraq.

School 4 is a city district in school 3's city in North Rhine-Westphalia. At the moment, they have 204 pupils and ten teachers. Pupils represent 10 nationalities and the share of children with migration background lays around 30 percent. Currently, 20 refugee children from Syria, Pakistan, Albania, Iraq and Iran attend the school.

## 5 Findings: Data analysis

The main intention is to find out about school's readiness. Like stated in the beginning, readiness refers to the state of preparedness of persons, systems and organizations to meet a situation. Translated into the research frame this means: state of preparedness of school personnel, community institutions and schools themselves to meet the ten domains of the integration indicator framework. Most of the detected needs of refugee pupils outlined by the literature and presented in this paper's section 3.2.3 and in table 1 could be grouped into the domains of the integration indicator domains. Consequently, the following section presents the information retrieved from the interviews and questionnaires and embeds, analyzes and discusses it against the background of the theoretical framework and aims to shed light on the questions

- What do schools do to be ready?
- What are major difficulties of integrating refugee children?

Respondents and participants of both written and orally given answers are in the following to referred to as interviewees.

## 5.1 Education Domain

### 5.1.1 Teaching personnel

Two schools employ non-German teachers: at school 1 there are seven teachers from Turkey and at school 3 one Aramean lady employed. Additionally, school 3 has school staff who speaks Russian. At school 2 and 4 there are currently no teachers with foreign or migrant background who give lessons.

All interviewed persons think that it would be of great advantage to have either teaching personnel at the school which can speak to non-Germans in their mother tongue or have at least sufficient interpreter and translation means available. When being asked about the employed teaching personnel, school 3 also mentioned special pedagogues, social pedagogues for pre-primary education, social pedagogues, a nursery educator and a family assistant.

### 5.1.2 Teaching refugees

About 4 years ago, school 1 received refugee children for the first time. Most pupils who had left their home and came to the city are mostly Bulgarian and Rumanian ones who are not regarded as refugees in the strict sense. Also they did not experience war in their home countries. School 2 deals with refugee children for over two years by now. About half a year back, school 3 and 4 welcomed the first refugees. At all schools the refugee children are allocated to regular classes but receive additional German lessons in separate groups from German as a second or as a foreign language teacher up to three hours per day.

#### *Intensive courses for learning German*

At school 3, a distinction between “German as Second language” (DaZ) and “German as a second language intensive support” (DiF) is made. DiF classes, for the children with no prior German skills, take place five times a week and DaZ is offered two times per week. DiF and DaZ groups are composed of six children at school 3, of around 13 children in school 1 and of 20 children in school 4. All teachers involved in teaching intensive German groups point towards the wide range of ability levels of their course participants: children who only know few German words may sit in the same group as children who are able to produce full texts. School 4, where all 20 refugee children are taught in the same group, explains that many Arabic kids have to be made familiar with western letters first. For this reason, the school offers a pre-course for the alphabetization and writing learn process.

Differentiating in the difficulty of tasks is thus necessary at all schools and done on a daily basis. One DiF teacher at school 1 teaches pupils who don't have any prior German language skills when they enter the school, too. In such cases she communicates with mimic and gestures, with picture cards, bilingual books and with the help of other children who can translate into the respective mother tongue. By means of her own language skills in English and Spanish, the school's Turkish teachers, the Bulgarian staff and further voluntary translators, the teacher is able to cover a range of languages. School's 1 intensive course teacher experiences best learning results with strict routines to structure the lessons. Consistent repeating and practicing consolidate the vocabulary. School 3's DaZ/ DiF teacher also considers games, references to everyday issues and movement while learning. Both schools let the children work in tandems and explain content to each other. At school 1, the teacher realized that often motivating children who stem from rather uneducated homes is more difficult.

The principal from school 3 sees the most challenging aspect about teaching and accommodating refugee children in their vast diversity. He detects all the individual fates which ask for individual treatment and care and recognizes their heterogeneity as outlined by Pastoor (2015). On the one hand, he believes, they need individual care but depend, on the other hand, on a group and networks. Combining these needs is a challenging task. All German as a second or foreign language teachers who were interviewed stated to be confronted with diversity in their intensive courses. In most cases, the groups, despite some division according to ability or knowledge level and age, are composed of refugee children who differ in terms of previous education, ability levels and German skills. This is especially the case at school 4 where all twenty refugee children are part of the same welcoming class and where a constant pupil fluctuation due to refugees' departure and arrivals is common. Assuring that each child is supported and stimulated to its individual needs becomes even more difficult.

School's 4 DaZ teacher says that she usually differentiates her exercises three times: for the children who don't have any prior German knowledge and are not literate either, for the children with limited and for the children who can already talk in simple sentences. At school 1, the DaZ teacher differentiates with five to six times even more.

### *Mainstream classes*

Schools 2 and 4 struggle to occupy the children during the mainstream lessons, mostly due to a lack of materials which would help to give refugee pupils meaningful tasks. So far, they are given small tasks, such as drawing- in pictures, to avoid that they are doing nothing. At school 1, refugee children are often asked to work on exercises on the computer. The interviewed

teacher at school 2 explained that her regular class is constantly supervised by two persons since an integration assisting staff is additionally placed in the class. At school 1, the teacher works with weekly schedules meaning that there are mandatory exercises, which should be finished by all pupils in the course of the week, and additional, expanded ones. Once per week, children have a two-hour session during which they are expected to work on their individual weaknesses. The resembles the individualized curriculum suggested earlier and allows for special adaptations for refugee pupils' needs.

Especially the principal from school 4 sees a challenge coming along with giving refugee children the chance to participate in regular classes: regular classes grow in their number of pupils. Receiving a permission from an authority to divide classes into two smaller ones is commonly not easy to achieve and related to several arguments and discussions. Teachers see the advantages for both refugee and regular pupils to learn together in the same classroom but overcrowded classes benefit neither of them. School 2's teacher said that, so far, things are still far away from running well.

#### 5.1.3 Teaching materials

School 4 explained that in regular classes, the refugee children have to work with the standard German materials. For the lessons in the welcoming class, school 4 relies on materials which were recommended from the district government for teaching German as a second language. For a school like theirs, such recommended material is certainly useful, especially because the school usually teaches few children without any skills in German. However, the principal of school 4 also sees that the recommended material limits the concerned teacher in her possibilities to organize the lessons. The interviewed teacher at school 2 mentioned that for being able to accommodate and teach children with refugee background more successfully, the provision of more adequate material is indispensable. School's 3 principal presented a little booklet which presents pictures out of all areas of the daily life. Children who cannot express them in the German language yet can at least point at the relevant pictures. Material like this is very useful but often has to be purchased by the school staff themselves. School 4's German as a second language teacher prepares and produces her own materials which she considers to be helpful in the welcoming class. School 1 started adapted material, for instance sound tables, for the reading learning process, to the refugees.

#### 5.1.4 Knowledge about teaching refugee children

At school 2, a teacher responsible for the teaching of German as a second language attends seminars and workshops which are concerned with the education of refugees. After such

events, this teacher informs her colleagues about the content. The interviewed teacher from school 2 wishes to attend more of such seminars herself, in order to learn more about how best to work with refugee children instead of being compelled to keep them occupied with random tasks. The teacher representing school 2 stated that she actually got in touch with (the topic of) teaching refugee children for the first time during her teacher training at the respective school since there were no topically related courses offered during her studies. Similar is true for an interviewed teacher at school 3. Workshops or seminars are not organized but well attended by school 3. Furthermore, round tables and a working group for German as second or foreign language are in place with the goal of exchanging working practices and thoughts for better functioning refugee aid.

At school 1,3 and 4 the interviewed teachers and principals had the impression that their knowledge about refugee children and teaching and caring for them is rather good. The interviewed teacher from school 2 stated honestly that she assesses her existing knowledge as being poor so far. School 1's interviewed class teacher announced that she would behave not too differently in her teaching, partly because she trusts her experience related to years of teaching migrant pupils and also because she trusts how her principal manages the refugee situation at her school so far.

All interviewees agreed that there it is always more to learn and it is deemed useful to acquire further knowledge. The DaZ teacher at school 4 mentioned in this context that she found useful booklets from educational publishers which provide helpful notes for teaching refugees. She also noted that she aims especially at continuously attending trainings and seminars related to the topic of refugee children. Moreover, she strives for enhancing her know-how about teaching children with no prior German knowledge because of her little teaching experience of those children.

What can be evaluated as being ready here is certainly the mindset and the willingness to acquire more knowledge for better handling school situations with refugees. The next step, which lays only partly within the realms of the schools, is the readiness factor of sufficient supply of support services. Since only one teacher mentioned the booklets, particularly designed from educational publishers to assist teachers, their availability may not be well-known enough. The same teacher invests time and effort in designing and producing her own materials which fit her pupils' needs and her lessons. School 3's principal said that his colleagues and him also purchase materials themselves. Hence, a lot of the success seems to depend on the teachers' and principal individual effort and engagement.

## 5.2 Health Domain

### Mental care for refugees

None of the schools has its own school psychologist at its disposal. School 1 can, however, request a psychologist from the school authority at any time who then comes to the school as an external. This psychologist is also responsible for other schools in the region. The decision to consult a psychologist is, in school 1, mostly made by a class teacher and is frequently related to behavioral problems or issues regarding child neglect inside the families. For pupils who deal with learning difficulties it is also possible to consult special need teachers who are situated in the school building and hence spontaneously available. School 2 reported school relations to external doctors and a psychologist. The teacher did not know, though, in how far translation means are available during a doctor's appointment with a refugee child. Through the child guidance office (*Erziehungsberatungsstelle*) psychological help can be requested by school 3. Generally, an advisory concept on various levels enables consultation on any content for all children in need. School 4 explained that due to the close cooperation with the CARITAS association, they can access a psychologist. The school is entitled to 20 counseling hours because the school is not considered to be a high risk school and therefore does not receive any social workers. School 4's principal mentions in this context that the teaching team had so far not the impression that any of their refugee children were highly traumatized or suffering from psychological disorders.

The domain "health" reveals several difficulties: school 3 pointed out that no school can ever assure that refugee children are provided with the psychological aid they actually need. Despite the schools' unified view on the importance of psychological help for children from professionals, it is generally hard to obtain since psychologists, who are often part of the school authority, are responsible for several schools. It was not possible to conduct an interview with a psychologist who treats ailments of primary school children but teachers referred to requests related to behavioral disorders or issues of child neglect. Even though none of the interviewed persons mentioned pupils who suffer from severe stressors, traumata or other mental burden, there is clearly the need to investigate whether the psychologists at hand are sufficiently trained for working with refugee children who may suffer from severe mental disorders and speak little or no German.

## 5.3 Social bridges Domain

### 5.3.1 Mentoring systems

School 2 matches newcomers to peers, for reasons of initial guidance and support. A refugee child is usually coupled to two pupils who take care, introduce and help him or her with

everyday school related matters. Facilitating the acclimatization with the school and the environment is regarded to be goal of the matching. In school 1 and 3 partner classes were established between the first and third or fourth grade. The older children from grade four are coupled to the young ones. Matching children is, however, not done based on nationality. In the pupils' time schedules, one fixed hour is reserved for activities with the partner class every week. Together they either read, do math exercises or draw. The idea behind the partner classes is, above all, a way to support the new first graders with their new experiences at school. Matching newly arrived children to particular classmates is, at school 3, done within the relevant classes. School 4 does not make use of a coupling or linking system and the principal trusts the class communities in the sense that she believes that the children are able to successfully integrate any newcomer into the class. Furthermore, she said that, especially for boys, the physical education classes are another great opportunity to strengthen the cohesion within a class.

All schools are aware of the necessity to assist children who newly arrive at the school. Only school 2 has a matching system for refugee children which differs a bit from the one for non-refugee pupils. Teachers were never disappointed in their expectation that the class community can integrate newcomers and that children are able to find a couple friends. What has to be kept in mind, however, is that all children in school 1 and 3, and most children in schools 2 and 4 are used to be around children from a variety of different backgrounds. School 4's German as a second language teacher believes that such an environment helps refugee children to quickly accustom to the class. Helpfulness may also be pronouncedly present due to similar experiences of children in the classrooms who did not speak proper German themselves when they entered school.

### 5.3.2 Parent-home liaison

In school 1 and 3 parents usually become familiar with the school and its rules during parents' evenings. It is up to the class teachers to organize them and decide on the frequency. The teacher from school 1 explained that these parents' evenings are hold in German. Due to the new arrival of Syrian refugees at school 1, the teacher sees the need to make available translators for those evenings. The attendance is usually high in the beginning of a school year and becomes by and by somewhat less. According to this teacher, it often plays a role to which extent parents know and like each other. In some classes this works well, in other less so. In addition to the parents' evenings, the school organizes parent consultation days which are greatly appreciated; hardly any parent skips this opportunity to have a personal talk with the teacher about the child's individual performances and behavior. If necessary, parents are called into the school for additional meetings, for instance for clarifications or explanations.



Additionally, school 1 and 4 offer parents to meet up in the parents' café (*Elterncafé*). People from the cultural association, for example Bulgarian translators, join as well from time to time and assist with translations. Parents receive help and information with regard to the equipment that pupils need to have in their school bags or advice about general everyday issues. School 4 established the opportunity for parents to get in contact in a parents' café three months ago and actively promotes the idea to parents. The principal at school 4 stated that the refugee children's parents notably put their hopes in the children. From their outer appearance, in the way they are dressed or groomed, as well as from their equipment, the refugee children cannot be distinguished from most of their peers. According to the principal, the parents attach great importance to equipping their children in the same way as natives and residents do.

In schools 1,2 and 3 parents are contract partners of an "education contract" which is signed by the pupil (in school 1 and 2), the school and the parents in the beginning of the first school year. This contract contains basic rules about joint interactions and learning at school and expects compliance with the content from all parties. Teacher 1 told that even though the rules should be clear to and accepted by everyone, they have to continually be mentioned and discussed in class. She was not sure whether refugee parents are currently also asked to sign this contract but she assumed so. In school 2's contract, all rules are visualized with small graphics and pictures.

With regard to establishing parent-school liaison, the schools do not apply different contact or communication forms to parents with and without refugee background which was also recommended in the literature (Schulberatungsstelle, 2015). All schools think it is important to meet the parents when they register their children and school 3's principal explained that this is usually the first way to get an impression of how the family is dealing with the flight experiences and the arrival in the new country.

In order to enable social bridges between natives and refugees, it is necessary to create mutual interest. Schools 1 and 4 step with the establishment of the parents' café in the right direction and foster the exchange between parents of all children. In order to encourage interest and openness, parents and grandparents are also invited to school events. The interviewed school representatives see the importance to actively confront skepticism and defensive attitudes of children and parents alike. In school 2 newcomer children receive a peer mentor who helps during the beginning in the new (school) environment.

## 5.4 Social Links Domain

### Cooperation and community involvement

Regarding other institutions which provide help for the school and the refugees themselves, school 1 is primarily in contact with the city's cultural centrum which, together with the city's university, offers a variety of intercultural aid and activities. Leaflets and information brochures are available at the school which are free to take along for the parents and inform about lunch options, sport activities, homework assistance and so forth. Next to cultural associations which aim to foster the integration of people with migrant or refugee background, school 2 also works closely together with the youth welfare office. This institution is mostly consulted when matters of negligence in a child's home arise. School 3 mentioned the city's school administration office, kindergartens, the district center, a family counseling office and the city's integration commissioner as persons and institutions with which the school regularly operates. The principal of school 4 named the counseling center for integration and the city's integration hub for being important institutions with which the schools regularly works. For the all-day offers in the afternoon, the school also cooperates with sports associations.

Referring to the readiness definition which takes into account the state of preparedness of systems, all schools are in contact with community service providers and additional offices. For refugee families it is helpful to get in touch with certain institutions through the school. Without the established cooperation it is more difficult for newly arrived persons to obtain information about offers of which they can make use of.

## 5.5 Social Bonds Domain

The literature about refugee integration and teaching refugee children stressed the importance to encourage staying connected with the original culture and language in order to maintain their identity (UNHCR, 1994). This aspect is part of the domain "social bonds". Schools 1 and 3 follow this advice and offer classes for mother-tongue teaching which allows the children to practice and stay connected with their mother tongue. In addition, pupils at those schools have the opportunity to attend Islamic and Syrian- Orthodox (at school 3) religious instruction courses. Involving the children's original languages into the lessons is done by some teachers. The principal explains that sometimes some situations in which the different languages are included happen by coincidence. Recently, the children discussed the different letter symbols of Russian, Chinese, Turkish and Arabic without the teacher telling them to do so. The teachers from school 1 and 4 stated the same about the curiosity of children regarding different

languages and cultures which is brought up every once in a while and without a specific demand to do so.

## 5.6 Language and Cultural Knowledge Domain

### 5.6.1 General associations with refugee children

One teacher's first associations with the notion "refugee child" are the personal fates of the children and the traumata by which they are affected. The principal from school 3 associates the need to help and has basic questions like "Why did they have to flee?" "Where does the child come from?" and "What educational background does the kid have?" in mind. A class teacher at school 3 thinks of war, poverty, fear, helplessness and the pictures of boat refugees as shown in the media. One other teacher thinks about motivated, very young children who are striving for knowledge and have already experienced a lot. The teacher from school 1 also mentioned many refugee children's ambition, diligence and willingness towards learning and being successful. School 4's principal voiced a feeling of consternation and the wish to help when confronted with the word "refugee child".

Generally, the interviewees hold a positive attitude towards refugees and even though first impressions include mostly the refugees' burdens and fates, throughout the conversations remarkable character traits and abilities were outlined and appreciated.

### 5.6.2 Acquiring knowledge about refugees

Occasionally, school 1 invites country experts who inform the teachers about characteristics of the countries from which the refugee children stem from. School 4 usually contacts the local point of integration when they need information about, for instance, a child's home country. In order to learn more about the background of individual refugee pupils, principals and teachers at all schools try to talk to the parents. Over time and due to daily contact with children in class, teachers get to know more details about them as persons and their experiences, too. School 3 and 4 referred to the counseling center in the city. All refugee families whose children may attend the school have to register there. The counselors collect the most important basic information about the newcomers which is afterwards shared with the school. School 4's principal said that parents often bring along relatives or acquaintances to the registration which makes the translation easier and allow the principal to retrieve relevant information about the family and its background. School 3 explained that all parents of future pupils have to fill out a registration form. This also applied for refugees, with the exception that some information can be filled in later if, due to translation difficulties, or unavailability of data, a complete filling is not possible.

The interviewed schools collect information about the individual refugees and most teachers referred to a continuous learning process since some aspects about the children's past come to light unexpectedly and based on the day by day interaction. Some teachers, however, feel like they need more information about the children in order to adapt their interactions with them.

### 5.6.3 Language and cultural acquisition

The interviewee at school 1 thought that it is not necessarily important that the teachers speak the language of the minority pupils or refugee children as long as there is, especially for larger groups and in the beginning of the language learning process, a translator available. School 1 stated that oftentimes children can translate for their peers who don't understand German good enough. Especially in the particular school's case where many Bulgarian children start going to school without speaking German, Turkish children can assist with interpreting since commonly Turkish is understood by Bulgarians as well. At school 3, teachers hold the opinion that speaking the language commonly used by the children would facilitate the contact with the children and could enable a whole other form of interacting. The principal of school 4 explains that it is the Arabic language more than any other language which challenges the school. For Arabic, she said, it would really be necessary to have teaching staff who can communicate with the children. Most teachers show honest interest in the represented languages and obtain basic skills. One teacher at school 1, for instance, usually learns greetings and idioms which ask for the state of well-being, numbers in the range of 20 and words for family relationships. Some teaching and caring personnel started to learn Arabic themselves.

The teachers in the DaZ or DiF courses repeatedly explain to the children that it is important that they speak German in class and practice a lot. DiF teacher from school 4 told that, occasionally, children who share the same mother tongue communicate in this language which often bothers their course members. Generally, she explained, children have a positive basic attitude towards learning a new language which is why they are willing to give their best in the learning process. The same teacher referred to only a single case where a refugee boy announced that he doesn't want to learn German but prefers to keep talking only in Arabic. Also at school 1, where only a minority of pupils is native German, the pupils speak mostly German with each other.

Aspects which really speak in favor of the participating schools' readiness, include the decision to teach the children in regular classes but give them additional language support in separate groups. This allows the children to spend more time around native children meaning that they

have their peers as language role models and good examples. Furthermore, it is favorable that teachers and principals show interest in acquiring knowledge in the children's mother tongues.

#### 5.6.4 Translation means

The teacher representing school 1 explained that an interpreter can be requested from the school authority at any time. It's the authority's obligation to provide the school with an interpreter if needed. Older children, mostly those in grade 4, also translate for their parents. According to the teacher, this worked from experience well. Also, in many cases, at school 1 and 4, parents bring along an own interpreter to meetings at school. The teacher at school 1 stated that in very few cases the school has to find an interpreting person itself. Problems arising from miscommunications based on a lack of language knowledge seem to barely happen at school 1. For school 2, translating between parents and teachers but also between children and teachers is more an issue. According to the interviewed teacher, the school is in need of a lot more translation means. Until now, it is usually the children themselves who have to translate as soon as their German skills are advanced enough to take on this task. The teacher did not know whether translators can be requested from a school board or whether the school already announced interest or need in such services. For school 3's principal the translation services are an aspect asking for improvement. He referred to one case where it is nearly impossible to find an adequate interpreter. It also has to be taken into account that some conversations which need to be translated contain sensitive information about the child or the family and that data protection has to be ensured. According to the principal, it should be possible to receive more interpretation means for refugees since schools are also entitled to interpretative aid for visually or hearing impaired children. At school 4, the principal said that oftentimes parents ask for the written form of information which they then enter in digital interpretation tools. Also, school 4 asks children to translate between parents and teacher if no other means are available.

One of the most challenging difficulty is related to the framework's domains of education and language knowledge is the communication between refugees, the children and their parents, and the school. Apart from school 1, all school representatives could clearly refer to situations where they wished for more translation means or possibilities to approach children in their mother tongue. The principal of school 4 stated as most challenging aspect of handling refugee children at school situations with pupils who display some kind of behavioral conspicuities but where reaching the core of the problem is extremely hard because of language barriers. In all schools, pupils are sometimes asked to translate for their parents or teachers. Referring back to what Pugh (2012) said about the benefits to have teachers

employed who are native speakers in the children's mother tongues, it is evident that a minority of schools have teachers employed who are able to communicate or translate in the refugees' languages of origin.

#### 5.6.6 Celebrating multiculturalism

School 1 explained that from the very first day at their school the children are in touch with multiculturalism, they are used to it and there is no real need to explain to them cultural differences between children exist because they experienced it every day. According to the perception of the teacher, those children learn the right handling with each other on the basis of daily interactions. She thinks children who did not grow up in a mixture of cultures and nationalities in their classes and environment, are more likely to face problems when interacting with different cultures and beliefs. School 2 stated something similar: even though the school doesn't organize specific events to celebrate cultural diversity, the teacher was convinced that the share of children from different countries itself would foster a multicultural awareness. In social society classes the teacher likes to include the element "festivities and events" and usually experiences large interest and curiosity among the pupils. At school 3, the interviewed class teacher covers topics about different cultures, beliefs and religions in religious education classes as well. For the principal of school 3 it is essential to actually live and promote diversity rather than organizing striking events. At school 4 it was organized a "Europe feast" and most parents, including refugees, bake or prepared traditional food and snacks. School's principal is convinced that worshipping an appreciating multiculturalism is promoted at school 4.

### 5.7 Safety and Stability Domain

#### 5.7.1 Safe Environment

##### Routines and Structure

At school 1, class teachers usually have their own rituals and procedures. The interviewed class teacher mentioned her daily farewell ritual: catching hands. Before the children leave the classroom at the end of the school day, one pupil gently grabs his right or left neighbor's hand who passes this grab on to his neighbor. This is done until the hand grab reaches the first pupil again who then wishes the whole class something nice for the afternoon. During this routine, no one is allowed to talk and even though some pupils, especially Muslim boys when they have to pass on the grab to a girl, who tend to argue about the ritual's implementation, all children participate and really enjoy it. No matter what has happened during the day, how turbulent or stressful it was, this measure helps the whole class to calm down, provides a

reassuring feeling and ends the morning in a nice manner. School 3's principal explained that most of the school days follow a strict structure and many routines are implemented throughout the day. In many classes, it is, for instance, started off with a morning circle. The principal points out that his pupils really need all of their strength and power to learn; adapting to changing circumstances would rather keep them off thereof. At school 4 most routines take place in the morning, and the principal referred to her own routines in her class consisting of welcoming all pupils, counting the attendance and asking for each other's well-being in several languages. All children are very much fond of those elements and also older pupils, those in grade 3 and 4, would like to hang on to the morning traditions. The interviewed teacher from school 2 could not think of any particular daily routines to foster stability. School 4's German as a second language teacher shared her routine in the welcoming class: she starts off the sessions with a good-morning song, afterwards the subject matter from the previous day is repeated in a playful manner. Next, the children sit in a circle and talk about their prior day or about a descriptive picture. After the new subjects were introduced and practiced, the teacher closes the session with a fare-well-song.

### Getting to know the school

Familiarizing the new children with the school building and the routines is at all four schools done through the class teacher, class mates, additional school staff or the principal. The teacher from school 1 told about her experiences with newcomers in her class: in almost every case there are at least one or two children who quickly develop sympathy for the newly arrived pupil and take care of it. From that moment on it is usually a process of getting to know the school better day by day. Otherwise, the teacher assures that the child is not left alone. In all the years that she is teaching, she experienced hardly any case where new children didn't connect at all. At school 1, new children always receive a welcoming-package which provides some basic information about being a member of the school and the school community. The other schools see the process of getting to know the school with all its rules as a natural one which emerges naturally by being part of a regular class and following around the class mates and peers.

### Emotional care

The interviewed teacher at school 1 observes that many parents have own problems and a large number of pupils live with only one parent. Some pupils ask for a hug or more attention from their class teacher since they lack such care at home. The teacher stated to already being used to such wants and has no difficulties to respond to similar needs from refugee children. The interviewee is convinced that children first have to feel comfortable in their

learning environment before a successful learning process gets started. The teacher in the welcoming class at school 4 notices a difference between the children with and without refugee background with regard to the need of affection from her as a teacher. Refugee children are fonder of it and also request more devotion. On the other hand, school 4 referred to experienced difficulties to establish trustful relationships with refugee children. At school 3, one pupil has to be picked up from home and guided to school because his mother is not able to do so. The interviewees' responses gave the impression that schools sometimes employ parental functions and school 3 recognizes that some families need active help to develop parenting concepts (principal from school 3).

### Anti-discrimination

Teacher 1 revealed that Turkish and Bulgarian children, tend to bring forward some negative attitudes towards each other which can also include racist or discriminating statements. Classes have their own "class councils" or "class consultation meetings" during which incidents, also the ones related to racist or discriminating insults, are brought forwards, discussed and negotiated. School 1 makes pupils from grade 1 and 2 attending a social training. In those sessions, they are especially made aware of possibilities to keep up a peaceful interaction with each other. For more severe incidents the school has also mediating hours. Teachers can send pupils to mediating trainings which work on the basis of a contract between the child and the teacher. In more severe cases, the child's parents are informed about the incident. The teacher representing school 2 stated that she was not aware of any fights or bullying incidents rooted in issues about racism or discrimination. Talking and discussing stereotypes and prejudices depends, according to her, on the grade. She experienced that her fourth grade children were already very mature which made open discussions possible. The children showed large interest in the topics and like her colleague from school 1, the teacher believes that active confrontation is most successful in combatting prejudices and stereotypes. Both, school 1 and school 2, stated that rules can be added, if not present yet, to the school ethos or school rules which especially refer to prohibiting racist or discriminating behaviors. School 3 stated to have few incidents related to discrimination or racism. The interviewed class teacher referred to more often occurring discussions related to religion and religious practices. In connection with the fasting month Ramadan, Muslim children recently argued about being a good or bad Muslim. To solve issues like that, the teacher relies on information, clarification and dialogue. School 3 also has pupil arbiters in place to help solving arguments and fights. School 4 is heavily involved in combatting racist or discriminating point of views in the school and in the school's neighborhood. In the school environment and between the pupils she does not experience major issues or fights related to ethnicity, origin or religious believes. The principal explained that they especially foster the



integration process of families who have high intentions to stay in the city. She explained that it requires to go on the offensive and establish contact and possibilities to meet up between natives and newcomer refugees.

The overall perception at all four schools is that few incidents related to discrimination or racism actually happen at the schools. One cannot exclude the possibility that those things happen without being reported to the teachers. Nonetheless, the schools, and especially school 1, have structures and systems in place which can be applied to any harmful statements or actions against refugee pupils. All school bet on active confrontation, communication and discussion in order to actively promote an appreciating understanding for diversity and being different. However, school 3's principal said that, also with regard to prejudices and stereotypes, negative perceptions seem to play not as much of a role as it is believed.

## 5.8 Rights and Citizenship Domain

The principal at school 3 shared the plan to establish a pupil parliament soon. By this means the schools would like to teach the children how participation can have an impact and to further promote western and democratic values. This approach is clearly representing the "rights and citizenship" framework domain which was not necessarily expected to be found in the primary schools. The more of a positive surprise it is.

Teaching children which basic rights exist for every person and introducing them early to ways in which decisions can be representatively made in a group, is important. This approach certainly makes the school ready to deal with a variety of different influences, taking into account cultural variety by at the same time promoting and teaching democratic participation.

## 5.9 Employment and Housing Domain

No question touched onto the integration indicator domain of employment and during the interviews nothing of the sort was mentioned.

The housing dimension was not expected to be represented in the schools' spectrum of integration facilitators. The more interesting was school's 4 statement to be involved in finding housing solutions for refugee families. The principal explained that the school sees the significance of having a proper home in the city where the children go to school and hence actively advocates that living space is made available for refugee families. Another aspect brought forward by the principal refers back to the facilitation of integration into the immediate neighborhood.

The school's commitment and responsible behavior is worth mentioning as a good practice example and shows that schools can be actively assisting the integration processes by even engaging in the housing dimension.

## 5.10 Assessments and Perceptions

### 5.10.1 Consequences of teaching refugees

At school 1 the teacher does not believe that parents will react negatively to an arrival of refugee children, mostly because the vast majority is itself foreign and with migration background. At school 2 the teacher expects twofold reactions from the side of the parents. She believes that there are certainly parents who appreciate that the school teaches refugee children, especially when knowledge prevails that learning a language and getting used to a new environment is facilitated by being in contact with other, and especially, native children. On the other hand, there are parents who hold a more critical attitude and fear that their own children's' learning process could suffer. The teacher pointed out that information and clarification, for example about the course procedures, help to encounter parental skepticism. The principal at school 3 stresses that his school is an "open school" which means that skeptical or critical parents who would like to get a picture from the procedures and circumstances can visit the school to do so. Such invitation for a clarifying visit can also reduce prejudices and stereotypes. School 4's principal knows that there are several residents and parents, in particular those who are strongly rooted with the city district, with resentments towards refugee families and the school's decision to accept and teach those arrivals. Since another school in the district actively promotes not teaching refugees, school 4 faces an additional hurdle to promote openness for refugee newcomers. At school 3, the principal mentioned an increasing number of requests for statistical data acquisition and challenges to distribute the resources over the additional needs of refugee children.

### 5.10.2 Perception about school's influence on integration and whole- school attitude and approach

Following aspects were asked to be rated according to the perceived importance of schools on the integration process of refugee children: the possibility to settle in the new country, assistance for regaining a feeling of belonging, supporting the social and emotional development of the children, providing structure and routine in the lives of the refugee children, quick language acquisition and an extensive knowledge mediation.

School 3 states that associations or religious communities are involved in the integration process, too, but major integration amplifiers are attached to schools. The principal sees the school's highest importance to integration contribution in particular in terms of quick language acquisition. According to him, the second most important aspect of schools is fostering new structures and routines in the life of the refugee children which is also the most important one according to the teachers at school 2 and 4. The four schools held the same opinion about the great importance that schools play with regard to regaining a feeling of belonging and agree as well on school's importance to socially and emotionally support the children. Slight differences in perceptions were found in the point knowledge mediation: school 2 and 3 found the extensive knowledge meditation somewhat less important, especially in comparison with the previously mentioned aspects.

Hence, all schools see themselves importantly contributing to the integration process of refugee children which is important in order to recognize the responsibility as well as opportunities of schools for refugee children's lives.

#### 5.10.3 Perception about the need to adapt

All schools think that a system of 'give and take' between refugees and schools is necessary. In principal 4's opinion, making clear what the schools expect from refugees and their parents helps them to integrate because they get a feeling of what is required. On the other hand, she is aware of the difficultness of refugee families' lives and reminds to keep in mind what one self would prefer in such a situation. A teacher at school 3 said that she sees the school to hold the major obligation to assure that children receive what they need but requires the parents' helot to assure that the children come to class, are equipped with materials and food and are picked up after the school day.

#### **Tabular summary of employed readiness factors at sample schools**

Aspects which all schools have in common are highlighted yellow and question marks indicate that no clear information about the issue was retrieved. Additional text elements shall clarify awarding or non-awarding readiness assessment.

Domain	Sub-domain	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Education					
	Foreign teaching personnel	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><d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	Translation means				
		Even though some means are available and especially for more common or already presented languages finding interpreters works, schools have limited translation means and at all schools, children sometimes have to translate.			
	Interest in refugees' language and culture	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
	Celebrating & teaching multiculturalism	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Safety & Stability					
	Warm welcome and getting to know school	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>		
		Refugee children are treated like others: getting to know the school happens by going along. Paying a bit more attention to their welcoming process is necessary.			
	Routines & Structures	<div><div></div></div>		<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
	Emotional care	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
	Anti-discrimination	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
		Schools pay attention to possible discrimination or racist incidents and discuss it with children, especially school 1 with the social training is prepared/ ready.			
Rights and Citizenship					
				<div><div></div></div>	
Housing					
					<div><div></div></div>
Employment		<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Whole-school attitude					
	Considering school's importance for and role in integration process	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Perceptions and Associations about refugees					









	Generally positive associations with refugee children				
	Reacting to residents' antipathy				

TABLE 2 OVERVIEW OF READINESS FACTORS EMPLOYED AT SAMPLE SCHOOLS

## 6 Discussion

### Does accepting refugee children leads to a concurrence situation for support?

The research provided insights with regard to consequences of competing for resources due to teaching refugee children at their schools. In two schools it was clearly stated that German as a second language courses targeted at migrant pupils had to be reduced, in other schools in Germany even completely abandoned. Furthermore, a general enlargement of regular classes is noticeable. Even though refugee children are not per se advantaged or disadvantaged regarding their access in all-day schooling, it naturally results in a longer waiting list. Two school representatives talked about the fear of families with low social status and families with migration background of being neglected or that their needs will be forgotten. It is deemed crucial to meet those concerns in order to avoid a general rejection of refugees based on the fear of competing for support.

### Teaching refugees in regular classes or teaching refugees in separated classes?

All sample schools teach their refugee children in both regular classes, usually according to their age, and in intensive-classes, usually according to their ability levels. This decision is a meaningful one for it allows for intensified language support and contact with local peers. Hence, teacher 1 also announced her concern regarding a political consideration to teach refugee pupils only in so called welcoming classes. Only the interviewed teacher at school 2 believes that some refugee children, especially those lacking motivation and willingness to participate, would be more helped if they were taught exclusively in separate classes where closer supervision is guaranteed. This statement may be related to school 2's statement that refugee children can often not be occupied with meaningful tasks during lessons in

mainstream classes. However, close supervision in small groups does not appear to be feasible since teaching personnel for DaZ and DiF classes are apparently scarce.

### **Teaching refugee children in homogenous or heterogeneous school settings?**

Most interviewees think that a mixed environment, consisting of native and foreign children, helps refugee children best to accommodate and integrate. The children may feel immediately more comfortable because they are not alone with dealing with difficult starting situations. Especially children who are naturally, or based on their experiences, less confident and anxious are expected to benefit more from a heterogeneous classroom. The advantage to ask a child with the same mother tongue for help is not to be overlooked either since this creates a climate of security. On the other hand, the language acquisition and adaptation process may happen faster in a homogenous classroom with predominantly native pupils where it is likely that a higher pressure to learn the language and adapt is experienced. Both sample schools with very high shares of migrant pupils believe that their schools are especially of advantage to accommodate refugee children. Though, attention needs to be paid that refugee children's special characteristics and needs are not disregarded based on the assumption that the school is already well prepared to teach migrant and foreign pupils.

### **Is there a relationship between the share of migrant pupils and readiness?**

While developing the research frame, one assumption was that schools with a larger share of migrant pupils would show more readiness to integrate and teach refugee children. All schools teach between 30 and 90 percent children with migration background.

In the conversation with the principals and teachers one got the impression that the schools with the highest shares of migrant background pupils demonstrate indeed several factors of readiness. School 1 and 3 are the ones which employ teachers from a foreign country, and offer additional mother tongue education to foster social bonds. School 3 also especially stressed to follow clear structures and routines. School 1 felt confident that refugee children can be accommodated and cared for really well at their institution. The schools fully embrace and welcome the different nationalities yet without giving the impression of desperate trying. One school's principal explained that being different is normal at his school. When talking about the school community, he likes to make a comparison to a garden. Many different plants and flowers grow in this garden, some are also the same but the overall picture is a colorful and mixed one.

## Comparison: children with migrant background and refugee children

Even though McBrien (2005) mentions the necessity to distinguish between immigrants and refugees, also in terms of schooling, the interviews' content gave the impression that actually a large number of relevant factors for education match. The class teacher from school 1 stated that she really thinks that refugee children are in good hands at her school. She also stated that, according to her perception, refugee children and children with migration background are comparable regarding their needs at school. However, the teacher stresses that refugee children will have an even harder start since one does not exactly know what they have experienced during their flight and if or how they process their past. School 3's principal, too, sees fears, traumata, loss, (experienced) living conditions and the new culture as the main distinctions between children with refugee and those with migration background. Many of the latter also deal with several stressors, grow up in broken homes or with little financial means. One teacher from school 3 regards the children with refugee and migration as being comparable from a perspective focusing on the need for language development and related visual learning support methods. From an emotional perspective, she sees more differences between the children and their needs at school.

The teacher at school 1 pointed at the experienced fact that the German language still causes a big problem for the majority of children with migration background -despite having been brought up in Germany and having attended a German kindergarten. And also principal 3 observes vast difficulties in migrant children's ability to properly speak in either of the languages that they learned and were brought up with. Hence, these schools already have great expertise with intensified German language classes.

Additionally, and as outlined by school 1, many of the materials and care and support structures which are already in place, can rather easily be applied to refugee children as well and equally benefit their needs. Especially the all-day schooling structures offering additional activities in the afternoon do good. Also, the general attitude held by the schools who accommodate a majority of migrant background children is very supportive, with regard to children, their families and multiculturalism.

Other influencing components: neighborhood, concurrence, all-day schooling and management?

Nevertheless, school 2 and 4 which had substantively less pupils with migration background at their schools, make numerous good efforts to be ready to integrate refugee children, too. In eleven readiness categories, they had similar results as the other participating schools with



80 and 90 percent migrant children. Thus, the relationship between the share of migrant pupils and readiness to integrate refugee children into primary schools seems to be less evident.

School 4 teaches least migrant children in the collection of sample schools but composes of several readiness features. One determining aspect therefore is probably the extensive attempt to successfully integrate refugees and their families in order to not upset the residents and to maintain the city district's distinctiveness from the rest of the city. Also the teacher at school 1 mentions the neighborhood to be an influential factor for the integration process at schools. If there is a defensive attitude of many inhabitants against refugee children and parents prefer to send their children to schools without foreigners or refugees, the integration process may be hampered. School 4 faces this particular situation of concurrence with surrounding schools.

The principal of school 3 believes that, in the end, it is the way and attitude of the school leading management team to address the issue of refugee integration that makes the difference. Showing responsibility and engagement, suggesting new ways to tackle new challenges and acting in a team may be more important than the ethnical composition of pupils. Both school 1 and school 3 mentioned situations in which creative solutions were found in order to meet best the needs of the children.

Concluding, one observes a tendency for a relationship between teaching more migrant background children and readiness. However, this connection may be amplified by elements such as neighborhood, school management and all-day schooling structures.

Nonetheless, all schools, regardless of their migrant pupils share, face several readiness limitations. Some cannot easily be changed and tackled by themselves. What schools need in particular and what schools themselves, local authorities and the government can do to increase readiness is presented in the section "policy recommendations".

School 3's principal expects a tendency in homogeneity for excluding refugee children because for pedagogues it is related to extreme challenges because of taking into account vast diversity and needs. Also the principal's colleagues reach their limits. When this happens, though, they communicate it and together it is thought about a solution. An example given by the principal referred to a boy who received individual support because that is a lot more effective for him and the entire class. By spending less time in his class, he causes less chaos and distraction.

## 7 Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the extent to which German primary schools are ready to integrate refugee children on the basis of integration indicator domains adapted to the educational setting. All four participating schools already accommodate refugee children and teach them in mainstream classes as well as in separate groups for learning German. Differences in the readiness scope were found between the sample schools. Striking for the somewhat readier schools was the promotion of social bonds (with mother tongue education and distinct religious classes), employing foreign teachers, the promotion of fair and peaceful interactions and the aim to educate decision-making participation. No sample school, however, gives the impression to be not ready at all for teaching, accommodating and integrating refugee children. A basic level of readiness was expected to stem from the share of children with migration background which characterized all four schools. A significant relationship could not be detected, though. The conversations with the school personnel revealed that factors such as school management, school neighborhood, all-day schooling offers and engagement of the school team, are influential as well. Some readiness factors and integration domains are especially challenging for all schools. Among those are, above all, the lack of translation means, teaching personnel as well as psychological support and adequate materials for teaching German as a second or foreign language. Some elements mentioned in existing literature about refugee education seem to be less problematic according to the schools: assigning newcomer children to peers, introducing the new pupils to the school building and rules are regulated less strictly. Rather, teachers and principals trust their class communities to provide a warm welcome for the refugee children. On the other hand, offering day-care schooling activities was not particularly mentioned in the literature but seems to be very effective. Moreover, all-day schooling structures resemble a lot the whole-school approach. Children can be around other German speaking children longer, receive additional care and parents have occasionally the possibility to meet other parents. It became obvious that all schools lack adequate materials, facilities, teaching and caring personnel, translation means and more information about how to teach refugee children. Despite these shortcomings, of which some the schools are not blame, it has to be pointed towards the overall positive perceptions of the interviewed teachers and principals towards the refugees. All study participants see the impact of schools in the integration process and are interested in enhancing their knowledge about educating children with refugee background. It was shown that acting together as an engaged team, being lead from an eager school leader and being open to creative solution, support being ready for the challenges which accompany the arrival of refugee children at German primary schools. Even though integrating refugee children is of

great importance, it became clear that this should by no means lead to situations which disadvantage other children and children with different special needs.

## 8 Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

Since the study was deliberately conducted as an examination of a small number of primary schools, generalizations on this issue are only possible to some extent. Rather the study aims to give an incentive to elaborate more on the topics of school readiness for refugee integration, differences between the influences of ethnical compositions and the approaches to multiculturalism, diverse and inclusive teaching methods. In addition to three live interviews and due to geographical distance or complications related to availability two more interviews were conducted on the phone and three teachers answered the interview question in a written form. The study suffers from some shortcomings with regard to comparability of data: it was neither feasible to conduct interviews with the same amount of school representatives nor to always talk to persons who hold the same position in the school: school 1 participated with one regular teacher and a teacher for German as a second/ foreign language, school 2 participated with one teacher, school 3 participated with a principal, a regular teacher and a teacher who teaches German as a second language and school 4 participated with a principal and a German as a second/foreign language teacher. However, it is assumed that all participating persons are familiar with the school, common teaching practices and procedures. Furthermore, various questions asked for personal assessment and evaluation and represent individual opinions about teaching and integrating refugee children. Still, other researchers may want to ensure a more equal representation of participating interviewees. Researchers interested in follow-up studies could also scrutinize whether using a scale to measure schools' readiness to integrate refugee children is useful.

A potential bias could lay in the sample of participating schools. All schools which agreed on answering interview question about the research topic already teach refugee children and may already have taken measures for adapting to the new circumstances. Contacted schools which teach predominantly native children often don't teach refugee children yet. None of such schools agreed to taking part in the study. As a consequence, some bias could distort this study and its results. Future researchers can try to compare the missing schools' types in terms of their readiness, integration possibilities and competences.

Analyzing qualitative data findings is seen to be more subjective because "a common belief amongst social scientists is that a definite, objective view of social reality does not exist" (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Thus, the study may be related to an issue of verifiability.

The choice for a cross-sectional study is related to the drawback of inability to check for spurious relationships and potential third variables which actually cause the relationship between schools and the supposed readiness to integrate children with refugee background. Other factors, that consciously or unconsciously were not taken into account, may be equally or even more explanatory for the handling of refugee children in the school setting. Future research may want to keep in mind this eventuality and compare their results with the ones in this paper.

Another recommendation for future studies includes considering in-depth studies by which schools are looked at and compared from more angles than solely through interviews. A cross-national perspective on the theme can be of relevance as well, especially for the purpose of learning from good practices. Since also adolescents are among refugees, a similar study which focuses on secondary schools can be of interest. Based on scholars who investigated schools' readiness and competences, related research about the actual integration success of refugee children could be conducted.

## 9 Policy recommendations

The Department for Education and Skills of the Ministry of State for Children, Young People and Families in the United Kingdom stresses that "investing time in developing good induction policy is almost time well spent anticipating and preventing problems later" (Ministry of State for Children, 2004). For this reason, the paper closes by shortly outlining what the interviewed schools claimed to need with regard to teaching refugees. It is then suggested what schools, local authorities and the government can do in order to enhance schools' readiness to integrate refugee children.

### **What do schools need to be more ready?**

Without exception, all schools stressed the need for more teaching personnel in order to teach, accommodate and care for refugee children more successfully. As long as there are not enough teachers who can teach German as a second or foreign language, the staff cannot be consistently placed in the same classes which reduces the sense of cohesion within the classes and impedes the process for refugee children to establish a trust relationship to teachers. More teaching personnel would be necessary to educate the children in smaller groups and to avoid a constant enlargement of regular classes. Allocating the refugee children to regular classes appears to be beneficial and important for their school success, however, the consequence of continuous enlargement of regular classes does not allow for a good learning environment for any child. Furthermore, an increasing number of challenges meets

an insufficient number of available teachers which can result in a competitive situation between native children, pupils with migration background and those with other special needs. In addition, schools see the need for more psychological aid, translation means, more background knowledge about refugee children and money to be spent on adequate and more materials and facilities.

### **What can schools do?**

Since the study pointed at the advantages of all-day schooling services, schools which have sufficient resources and enough demand can think of establishing all-day schooling services. They serve as further integration facilitators in the sense that they allow refugee children to be around German speaking peers and teachers for several more hours. It also gives refugee children the opportunity to participate in activities which also comprise non-verbal occupations and may distract them from difficult situations at home, fearful thoughts or from feeling worried or sad.

Secondly, and related to principal 4's perception that one of the most crucial aspects for reducing skepticism and suspicion is active confrontation and getting to know the newcomers, it is recommended to connect new refugee families to native families, or those that live in the region for a longer time already. Such a voluntary coupling could be built upon a similar idea than the one of matching new pupils to peers at school. Parents with refugee background who otherwise may have difficulties to get to know other adults and to make friends in their new environment, can be introduced and guided through the initial struggles of settling in Germany. Basic aid and explanations or emotional support do not necessarily require extensive language skills from either party.

Moreover, a third recommendation calls for courageous and creative behavior when tackling difficult or unexpected situations with refugee children. If proven methods and strategies don't work in their particular context, they should try to find a personalized solution for the circumstances. It would also be helpful to exchange more experiences and strategies with other schools. Sharing such guides, frameworks and good practice examples can contribute to burden-sharing.

### **What can local authorities do?**

When accommodating refugees in a city or city district, local authorities should aim at spreading a manageable number of newcomers and families over the place. Avoiding a ghettoization contributes a lot to tackling the initial skepticism from residents with which

refugees are often confronted. Less negative attitudes help the entire family to settle more quickly in the new area and forming personal relations to the newcomers and getting to know each other is facilitated if the number of newly arrived people is kept manageable. The interviewed teacher at school 1 announced that allocating refugees over a city district which is already inhabited by nearly exclusively foreign or migration background people is not automatically beneficial for their integration or a good atmosphere in the area.

Secondly, local authorities should actively foster the establishment of a strong network with well-functioning communication structures between the schools and other local institutions. Clear structures can help to forward refugees' concerns to the respective office. Also, setting up an integration commissioner and a local integration consulting office as a first contact point is recommended for local authorities and policy makers. Due to one interviewed principal's need for increased public relations work about the school's offers, for instance the parents' café, local authorities and the network partners may intensify communicating such offers at other occasions.

### **What can the government do?**

Despite the fact that German federal states offer different teaching programs, all prospective teachers should be taught about intercultural knowledge as well as educating refugees more frequently and thoroughly during their studies. Young teachers who were interviewed stated that they were not taught anything about dealing with refugees in their classrooms, children who may suffer from severe psychological issues and who may show behavioral problems based on pre- or post-migration traumata. Certainly, every interaction with refugee children will differ from another one, some teaching students may never get in contact with refugee children, but having a basic understanding with regard to this issue is certainly of advantage.

Educational policy makers should think about how more all-day schooling offers can be made available. The study for the development of all-day schools (StEG) found that participation, in all-day schooling offers, in particular regularly and several times per week, can positively enhance the social competences of pupils (StEG, 2012). The quality of the offered activities has to be ensured, too, in order to make all-day schools successful. Hence, financial means need to be provided and multi-professional teams established.

Additionally, the conditions and incentives for the position of a primary school principle have to be improved. Currently, at around 1000 schools, principal positions are vacant (tagesschau, 2016). In order to fill those posts, conditions need to be improved. Principals should be paid the same or similar amount of money as their colleagues from secondary schools. Also,

principals need to be able to devote more time to their managerial tasks and less on teaching responsibilities. Principal 3's assessment about the importance of the school leader's personal effort and engagement for the success of a school stresses the significance to undertake measures to create better conditions for principals to enable him to unfold his full potential.

National education and local policy makers should try to prevent increasing self-selection processes in the sense that native German parents fear the higher amount of foreign pupils at a school and thus send their children to a school which is known to be homogenous or "white". All interviewed teachers and principals see advantages in educating children in a multicultural classroom. Any child benefits from learning in a diverse environment. Children who perform academically very well improve their social skills while explaining exercises or content to peers. Other pupils, namely migrant or refugee background children, benefit from German classmates who serve as language role models and thus help to improve linguistic skills.

Additionally, it has to be thought about ways to attract more men and women with migration and refugee background into the teacher profession. Special funding and scholarships as well as projects, similar to the existing "Schülercampus" (Hamann, n.d.), a four days' seminar for migrant pupils about the aspects of becoming a teacher could be starting points. Also, teacher at secondary schools should directly approach adolescents who may be suitable for a teaching profession. Teachers with migration or refugee background can especially motivate children who have a similar background or experiences, they are often regarded as role models and have a more intense connection to the pupils allowing for more trustful, healing and motivating relationships.

Finally, a recommendation suggests for lower restrictions to be able to teach German as a second language, at least until more teachers for German as a second or foreign language have finished their studies and start their teaching profession.

Concluding, it remains to say that most requests for support from schools and suggested policy measures can only be met through higher expenses on education.

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## APPENDIX A

### **Translated interview questions**

#### **Interview questions for principals regarding the topic “Integration of refugee children in German primary schools”**

##### **Background:**

Within the scope of my bachelor thesis for the study “European Public Administration” at the University of Twente in Enschede (the Netherlands) German primary schools are compared on the basis of already existing capacities and competences for integration. Possible differences are being worked out. The research shall contribute to educational and integration politics and help to make integration of refugees (more) successful.

All information retrieved from the interview and information about the school in general are only used for the bachelor thesis and are treated confidentially.

##### **Information about the principal:**

- (1) For how long are you already the school's principal?

##### **Information about the school:**

- (2) How many pupils do you currently have at your school?
- (3) Which nationalities are represented by your pupils?
- (4) How many of your pupils have a migration background?
- (5) How many teachers teach at your school?
- (6) Do you have teachers who come from foreign countries?
  - If so: can you name their countries of origin?
  - Do these teachers have a migration background?

- (7) Do you have special teachers at your school who teach German as a Second Language or German as a Foreign language?
  - If so: How many of such teachers do you have?
  - If so: How are they engaged in the school day? (e.g. additional intensive classes or courses?)
- (8) Do you have teachers who can teach non German pupils in their mother tongue?
  - If so: How is made use of their ability to teach the children in their mother tongue?
- (9) Do you think it would be valuable to have teachers with a migrant or refugee background who can speak the language of the children and their families?
  - If so: why? (e.g. facilitation for teaching?)
  - If not: why not? (e.g. impeding integration?)
- (10) With which institutions, organizations, associations, services is your school in contact, especially regarding integration of refugees?
- (11) Have refugee children already attended your school so far?  
And do you currently teach refugee children?
  - If so: how are they currently be taught?
  - If so: From which countries do they stem?
  - If not: How have you already got in touch with the topic of refugees in German primary schools?
    - So far, not at all
    - Through exchange with other schools
    - Through seminars, trainings or meetings with other principals
    - Through own knowledge acquisition and personal interest

### **Refugee children – discourse**

- (12) What are your first associations with the notation “refugee child”?
- (13) Do you organize workshops for teachers and or parents to inform about teaching refugee children?
- (14) Do you think migrant children and refugee children are comparable in terms of their needs at school?
  - In which aspects do you think they are comparable?
  - In which aspects are they not comparable?

### **Education**

- (15) -not asked-
- (16) Can you provide teachers with sufficient decision space in order to arrive at the changes which seem to be necessary when teaching refugees?
- (17) How do you make use of differentiated teaching methods at your school?  
(in the sense that pupils receive exercises which are adapted to their individual ability and knowledge level)

### **Mental health**

- (18) Which means do you have to ensure that children sufficiently receive the psychological treatment which they need? What do you do when a child needs psychological help?
  - Do you have an own psychologist at your school?
  - Do you have connections to external psychologists, doctors or hospitals?
  - With which topics does the psychologist commonly deal with?
- (19) Who usually initiates measures to support the child with relevant psychological/ medical help? (class teachers, principal, ...?)

### **Social bridges**

- (20) Does your school have a mentoring or pupil-matching system in place?  
(Here it is referred to the idea to match newly arrived children to peers who already the school in order to assist the newcomers during the acclimatization period.)
  - If so: what does the system look like?
  - Do you deliberately match refugee children with native pupils? Or do you couple them to children with a similar background?
- (21) Parents-School liaison
  - How are foreign parents from parents from refugee children or familiarized with the school, the school system or the rules?
    - Is that information translated into the relevant languages?
  - How often are parents approximately invited to events in the school (per year)?
  - How often are parents approximately invited to conversations with teachers? (per year?)
  - How is reacted to parental ignorance to notifications by the school?
  - Do you think that teaching refugee children at your school affects the perception of (native) parents to send their children to your school?
    - What would you do in order to meet this skepticism?
- (22) Do you think unintended consequences are to be experienced of your school?  
(Media attention, request on statistical data, ...)

### **Social links within and with the school**

- (23) Does your school have a school ethos?  
(= Some declaration how the school community wants to live and work together)
- If so: is it written down?
  - Are the students and teachers aware of it?
  - How is it practiced in every day school environment?
  - Is it possible to adapt it with regard to rules about discriminating or racist behavior (in case it not already is)?
- (24) Do you face conflicts related to discrimination, racism or bullying at your school?
- (25) How do you deal with discrimination, racism or bullying at your school?
- Are the related problems discussed and exposed to the pupils?
  - Are the parents of the victims and the offenders informed?
- (26) How is dealt with possibly represented stereotypes or prejudices (also related to refugees)?

### **Cultural and language acquisition (mutual)**

- (27) How are newcomers' parents familiarized with the
- School building?
  - German educational system?
  - rules (particular requirements or homework policies)?
- (28) Which kind of translation means do you have at your school?
- Do you have external interpreters who can be called in?
  - Do children sometimes have to translate for their parents/ for the teachers?
  - Do you need additional interpretation means if you teach/taught children with refugee background?
- (29) Do you celebrate cultural/ ethnical diversity?

- If so: can you please name examples of events, activities, establishments, teaching methods etc. at your school which comply with this idea?
- When did you start with those elements? Do you see a difference to before?

- (30) Are you pupils educated in a way to pay attention and appreciate multiculturalism?

### **Safety and Security**

- (31) Does your school have daily routines which involve the children? (e.g. morning circle, cleaning the classroom together,...)
- (32) In how far do you see the school to be involved in the refugee children's integration process?
- (33) How important do you consider school to be regarding the integration process of refugee children with regard to following aspects:
- Possibility to settle in the new home
  - Regaining a feeling of belonging
  - Support for social and emotional development
  - Promotion of structure and routine in the life of the refugee child
  - Quick language acquisition
  - Extensive knowledge promotion
- (34) Do you think it is better to include refugee children in schools where there are many Dutch pupils or where there is already a mix of different nationalities and backgrounds?
- Why?
  - Which pupils would benefit from a mixed classroom? And which pupils would benefit from a homogenous classroom?

### **Assessment and perceptions about teaching refugee children**

- (35) How do you inform yourself about the refugee children's backgrounds?

- (36) How would you judge your current knowledge about refugee children?
- (37) Where do you see the biggest challenges with regard to teaching of and caring for refugee children?
- (38) What does your school still need, according to you, in order to teach and and accommodate refugee children (more) successfully?
- (39) To which extent to you think that a school can adapt to the needs of refugee children and to which extent have the refugee children to be expected to adapt to the school?
- [(40) What role do all-day schools play in the integration process of refugee children?]

## Interview questions for teachers regarding the topic “Integration of refugee children in German primary schools”

### Background:

Within the scope of my bachelor thesis for the study “European Public Administration” at the University of Twente in Enschede (the Netherlands) German primary schools are compared on the basis of already existing capacities and competences for integration. Possible differences are being worked out. The research shall contribute to educational and integration politics and help to make integration of refugees (more) successful.

All information retrieved from the interview and information about the school in general are only used for the bachelor thesis and are treated confidentially.

### Information about the classes taught:

- (1) How many pupils do you currently teach in your class(es)?
- (2) Which nationalities are represented by the pupils in your class(es)?
- (3) What is the percentage of children with migration background?
- (4) How many different teachers teach your class?
- (5) Do you think it would be valuable to have teachers with a migrant or refugee background who can speak the language of the children and their families?
  - a. If so: why? (e.g. facilitation for teaching?)
  - b. If not: why not? (e.g. impeding integration?)
- (6) With which institutions, organizations, associations, services is your school in contact, especially regarding integration of

refugees?

- (7) Have refugee children already attended your school so far?  
And do you currently teach refugee children?
  - a. If so: how are they currently be taught?
  - b. If so: From which countries do they stem?
  - c. If not: How have you already got in touch with the topic of refugees in German primary schools?
    - i. So far, not at all
    - ii. Through exchange with other schools
    - iii. Through seminars, trainings or meetings with other principals
    - iv. Through own knowledge acquisition and personal interest
- (8) Have you already taught refugee children or do you currently teach refugee children?

### Refugee children – discourse

- (9) What are your first associations with the notation “refugee child”?
- (10) To which extent were you already confronted with the topic of refugees in German primary schools?
  - a. When did you get in contact with this topic first?
  - b. Where did you primarily get your knowledge about refugees in primary schools from?
- (11) Are workshops for teachers and or parents organized to inform about (teaching) refugee children at school?
- (12) Do you think migrant children and refugee children are comparable in terms of their needs at school?
  - a. In which aspects do you think they are comparable?
  - b. In which aspects are they not comparable?

### Education

- (13) -not asked-



- (14) Would you label objects or signs in the school and in your classroom with the expressions in the children's mother tongue?
- (15) Do you know polite phrases, greetings etc in the children's mother tongues? Would you be interested in learning them?
- (16) Do you have possibilities to include the topic "flight" and the children's background in the lessons?
- (17) Do you feel that you are provided with sufficient decision space in order to arrive at the changes which seem to be necessary when teaching refugees?
- (18) How do you make use of differentiated teaching methods in your lessons?  
(in the sense that pupils receive exercises which are adapted to their individual ability and knowledge level)

### **Mental health**

- (19) Which means do you have to ensure that children sufficiently receive the psychological treatment which they need? What do you do when a child needs psychological help?
  - a. Do you have an own psychologist at your school?
  - b. Do you have connections to external psychologists, doctors or hospitals?
  - c. With which topics does the psychologist commonly deal with?
- (20) Who usually initiates measures to support the child with relevant psychological/ medical help? (class teachers, principal, ...?)

### **Social bridges**

- (21) Does your school have a mentoring or pupil-matching system in place?  
(Here it is referred to the idea to match newly arrived children to peers who already the school in order to assist the newcomers during the acclimatization period.)
  - a. If so: what does the system look like?

- b. Do you deliberately match refugee children with native pupils? Or do you couple them to children with a similar background?

### **(22) Parents-School liaison**

- a. How are foreign parents from parents from refugee children or familiarized with the school, the school system or the rules?
  - i. Is that information translated into the relevant languages?
- b. How often are parents approximately invited to events in the school (per year)?
- c. How often are parents approximately invited to conversations with teachers? (per year?)
- d. How is reacted to parental ignorance to notifications by the school?

### **(23) Do you think that teaching refugee children at your school affects the perception of (native) parents to send their children to your school?**

- i. What would you do in order to meet this skepticism?

### **(24) Do you think unintended consequences are to be experienced of your school? (Media attention, request on statistical data, ...)**

### **Social links within and with the school**

- (25) Does your school have a school ethos?  
(= Some declaration how the school community wants to live and work together)
  - a. If so: is it written down?
  - b. Are the students and teachers aware of it?
  - c. How is it practiced in every day school environment?

- d. Is it possible to adapt it with regard to rules about discriminating or racist behavior (in case it not already is)?
- (26) Do you face conflicts related to discrimination, racism or bullying at your school?
- (27) How do you deal with discrimination, racism or bullying at your school?
  - a. Are the related problems discussed and exposed to the pupils?
  - b. Are the parents of the victims and the offenders informed?
- (28) How is dealt with possibly represented stereotypes or prejudices (also related to refugees)?

### **Cultural and language acquisition (mutual)**

- (29) How are newcomers familiarized with the
  - a. School building?
  - b. German educational system?
  - c. rules (particular requirements or homework policies)?
- (30) Which kind of translation means do you have at your school?
  - a. Do you have external interpreters who can be called in?
  - b. Do children sometimes have to translate for their parents/ for the teachers?
  - c. Do you need additional interpretation means if you teach/taught children with refugee background?
- (31) Do you celebrate cultural/ ethnical diversity?
  - a. If so: can you please name examples of events, activities, establishments, teaching methods etc. at your school which comply with this idea?
  - b. When did you start with those elements? Do you see a difference to before?
- (32) Are you pupils educated in a way to pay attention and appreciate multiculturalism?

### **Safety and Security**

- (33) Does your school have daily routines which involve the children? (e.g. morning circle, cleaning the classroom together,...)
- (34) In how far do you see the school to be involved in the refugee children's integration process?
- (35) How important do you consider school to be regarding the integration process of refugee children with regard to following aspects:
  - a. Possibility to settle in the new home
  - b. Regaining a feeling of belonging
  - c. Support for social and emotional development
  - d. Promotion of structure and routine in the life of the refugee child
  - e. Quick language acquisition
  - f. Extensive knowledge promotion
- (36) Do you think it is better to include refugee children in schools where there are many native pupils or where there is already a mix of different nationalities and backgrounds?
  - a. Why?
  - b. Which pupils would benefit from a mixed classroom? And which pupils would benefit from a homogenous classroom?

### **Assessment and perceptions about teaching refugee children**

- (37) How do you inform yourself about the refugee children's backgrounds?
- (38) How would you judge your current knowledge about refugee children?
- (39) Where do you see the biggest challenges with regard to teaching of and caring for refugee children?
- (40) What does your school still need, according to you, in order to teach and and accommodate refugee children (more) successfully?

(41) To which extent do you think that a school can adapt to the needs of refugee children and to which extent have the refugee children to be expected to adapt to the school?

[(40) What role do all-day schools play in the integration process of refugee children?]

## Questions about “Integration of refugee children in German primary schools”

### Teacher for German as a Second/ Foreign Language

#### Background:

Within the scope of my bachelor thesis for the study “European Public Administration” at the University of Twente in Enschede (the Netherlands) German primary schools are compared on the basis of already existing capacities and competences for integration. Possible differences are being worked out. The research shall contribute to educational and integration politics and help to make integration of refugees (more) successful.

All information retrieved from the interview and information about the school in general are only used for the bachelor thesis and are treated confidentially.

#### Personal Details

- (1) You teach German as a Second Language/ German as a Foreign Language at a primary school. Which educational path brought you in this position?
- (2) Which languages do you speak?

#### Taught student body

- (3) How many classes or groups do you teach?
- (4) How many pupils are in your classes or groups?

- (5) How many times per week do you teach the children? How long last the sessions?
- (6) Which German language skills/ levels do the children have?
- (7) How large is the ability range in your classes? How differentiated do you need to teach?
- (8) Do you also teach children without any German language skills?
  - a. If so: How do you usually communicate with those children? And how do you communicate exercises and tasks?
  - b. Do you lean important words, phrases or expressions in the pupils' mother tongues? (e.g. the need to go to the toilet or to drink something)
- (9) In how far do you make use of non-verbal teaching methods and materials?
- (10) How do you usually achieve the best results regarding the language learning process?
- (11) Do you see differences regarding the pupils' motivation to learn German?
- (12) To which extent/ How do you include the pupils' mother tongues in the lessons? (or are your lessons mother-language free zones?)
- (13) What are your first associations with the notion "refugee child"?
- (14) Have you already taught refugee children or asylum seeking children?
  - a. If so: Do you see differences in teaching children with and without refugee background?
    - i. Regarding the ability to learn,

- ii. Regarding the participation and acclimatization in the group?
- iii. Regarding the contact to you as teacher
- iv. Regarding the contact with peers

- b. If so: According to you, what requires special attention with regard to teaching refugee children?
- c. If so: Do you get the impression that children are affected by traumatic experiences or other psychological stress?
- d. If no: Do you think that differences exist with regard to teaching children with and without refugee background?
  - i. Regarding the ability to learn,
  - ii. Regarding the participation and acclimatization in the group?
  - iii. Regarding the contact to you as teacher
  - iv. Regarding the contact with peers
- e. If no: What do you think, would require special attention with regard to teaching refugee children?

- (15) Which support/ what would you need in order to make your teaching and your lessons more successful?

### **Assessment and perceptions about teaching refugee children**

- (16) How do you inform yourself about the refugee children's backgrounds?
- (17) How would you judge your current knowledge about refugee children?
- (18) Where do you see the biggest challenges with regard to teaching of and caring for refugee children?

(19)What does your school still need, according to you, in order to teach and accommodate refugee children (more) successfully?

(20)To which extent do you think that a school can adapt to the needs of refugee children and to which extent have the refugee children to be expected to adapt to the school?

### **Safety and Security**

(21)Does your school have daily routines which involve the children?  
(e.g. morning circle, cleaning the classroom together,...)

(22)In how far do you see the school to be involved in the refugee children's integration process?

(23)How important do you consider school to be regarding the integration process of refugee children with regard to following aspects:

- a. Possibility to settle in the new home
- b. Regaining a feeling of belonging
- c. Support for social and emotional development
- d. Promotion of structure and routine in the life of the refugee child
- e. Quick language acquisition
- f. Extensive knowledge promotion

(24)Do you think it is better to include refugee children in schools where there are many Dutch pupils or where there is already a mix of different nationalities and backgrounds?

- a. Why?
- b. Which pupils would benefit from a mixed classroom? And which pupils would benefit from a homogenous classroom?

## APPENDIX B

### English summaries of interviews and questionnaires

#### SCHOOL 1

##### Summary of the interview at school 1: Teacher

Interview conducted: 28.05.2016

###### Questions from principal question set:

- (2) The school has currently approximately 400 pupils.
- (3) Between 18 and 20 nationalities are represented by the pupils.
- (4) Over 90 percent of the pupils have a migration background.
- (5) The school has about 50 teachers (6) of whom some are Turkish. Three of them already teach for several years at the school and the other two were sent from the Turkish Consulate in Istanbul.
- (7) At the school, there are three teachers who teach German as a second language.  
How are they involved: *Intensivtreffen* and children who enter the school without German language skills are firstly distributed, according to their age, to a regular class and are taught in *Intensivklassen* two hours per day. Those *Intensivklassen* are taught by the German as a second language teachers. Depending on the learning progress they can enter different levels of *Intensivklassen*. Apart from the two hours of additional German lessons, they participate with their peers in regular classes.

###### Questions from the teacher question set:

- (1) The teacher's class size is 21
- (3) of which 99% of the pupils have a migration background.

(7) Refugee children: they had Somali pupils (but they now moved into a different part of the city)

(5) According to the teacher, it is not necessarily important that the teachers speak the language of the minority pupils or refugee children. But it has at least to be ensured that, especially for larger groups, a translator is available. At least in the beginning. And it also depends: there is little need for a translator for the Bulgarian pupils because most of them speak Turkish and can then be assisted by their Turkish classmates who translate.

(6) a cultural centrum– in combination with the university the city provides intercultural offers for activities and this cultural centrum is also in touch with the primary school.

(7) Currently 5 or 6 Syrian children. The majority of new pupils who don't speak German when they enter the school are children from Bulgaria.

(8) yes.

(9) For the teacher it is hard to tell what her first association with the term "refugee child" is because in her school, she thinks, the children are in good hands.

(10) The first time that the teacher got in touch with refugee children was 4 or 5 years ago. The teacher stresses that at her school, it is especially the Bulgarian and some Rumanian pupils who arrive. Those children also left their countries but are not to be regarded as the typical refugee children.

(11) The teacher explained the school already invited professionals who informed the school's teachers within the scope of teacher conferences or teacher training courses about Somalia or Bulgaria. Those information was directed at the teachers, not so much at the parents.

(12) With regard to similarities between migration background pupils and refugee children in terms of needs at school, the teacher thinks that they are comparable. However, she stresses that the refugee children will probably have it even more harder, especially because one does not know exactly what they experienced during their flight and if or how they process the past.

The teacher explains again that new Syrian refugee children have only just arrived (so there are no reference frameworks yet). (13) The teacher said that she hasn't heard that children without any German language skills should first be taught in their mother tongue, to get a basic feeling for language and she actually somewhat doubts it, mainly based on her own experiences. She refers to Somali children who arrived two years ago, started off in the *Intensivklassen* and are by now without further troubles participating in regular classes. Further positive examples include an Afghan girl and two Bulgarian children.

(14) The teacher does not label things or signs in the children's' home languages because it does not really apply to the needs of her class but she strongly assumes that her colleague who teaches among others the new (refugee) children is probably making use of such methods, also taking into account a lot the children's' origins. Initial sound tables which are used to learn reading were previously adapted. The teacher explains that the German as a second language teacher will know more about that topic because she was especially trained for such classroom situations.

(15) She also thinks that the teachers are usually able to greet parents in their home language. At this point of the interview the teacher mentions the so called "Elterncafé", a café for parents inside the school, the people from the cultural centrum who assist the school with their offers, come to meet the parents in this café and assist with translations. They also explain, for example, what pupils need to have in their school bags and in general assist and advice the parents with everyday issues.

(16) Regarding the possibility to take into account and include the migrant children or refugee children's' background and experiences, the teacher said that her 4<sup>th</sup> graders initiated themselves the idea to prepare presentations about the countries of their parents or their own home countries. The results are going to be written down and distributed to all children as a farewell present before they leave the primary school. Some also brought along typical food and snacks and all children really enjoyed it. It was the children's decision and not influenced by the teacher.

(17) Regarding the decision freedom to adapt the lectures and teaching style to the needs in the respective class and the pupils in it, the teacher said she would always decide for herself. She cannot speak for her colleagues but doubts that there would be very fixed and restricting rules. Here, the teacher evokes that primary schools work differently than secondary school types. Due to the fact that the class teacher spends a lot more time in the class than subject teachers, there is a bigger scope of freedom possible.

(18) To the question about differentiated learning methods, the teacher referred to her weekly plans. Those plans include mandatory tasks which have to be accomplished by all pupils, and additional, expanded tasks. Once a week, for a period of two hours, individual learning takes place during which each child shall work on its deficits. The children should learn to identify their individual weaknesses but the teacher regularly checks on their decisions what they consider to be their deficits. The teacher claims that knowledge of the German language is still one of the major issues for migrant children even if they were born in Germany and attended a German kindergarten. She stresses the great importance of talking a lot with and to the children to broaden their vocabulary.

(19) A school psychologist can be requested by the school at any time who then comes from external to the school. Several special teacher colleagues are located in the school building because they used to teach at so called "Förderschulen" but in the respective Federal state, this school type does not exist anymore.

(20) Most of the times the class teachers are the ones who inform the psychologist. If a subject teacher recognizes issues first, there will be talks initiated between the class and subject teacher. The teacher herself did not exactly know with which topics the psychologist deals most commonly with, but she assumes that it is often about behavioral problems or issues regarding child neglect inside the families. Conducting an interview with such a psychologist could be difficult, according to teacher's perception, because she is situated in the school authority and is also responsible for several schools.

(21) The school has set up partner classes between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. A matching to peers according to nationality or native pupils does not take place, however. In the children's time schedules one fixed hour is reserved every week for activities with the partner classes. The children either read, draw or do mathematics together – depending on the communication between the two class teachers. It is seen as small support for the younger children.

(22) How newcomer children's' parents become familiar with the school, the rules and the school system? – Mostly the information is shared during parents' evenings, however, exclusively in German. The teacher stated from herself that for the newly arrived parents (Syrians) it probably needs to be changed and information translated.

The attendance of such parents' evenings is usually high in the beginning of a school year and becomes somewhat less during the year. According to the teacher, it also plays a role to which extent the parents know and like each other. In some classes this works fine, in others less well. Some parents organized a breakfast for the whole class and put an enormous amount of effort in the preparation. This event was absolutely lovely.

Individual parent consultation days are usually attended best. Hardly any parents are missing. This is due to the fact that those meetings are an individual talk with the teacher and specifically about that one child. Familiarizing with school rules need to happen at the school start and, if necessary, calling in the parents for parents' evenings for further reminders or explanations.

Parent consultation events take place after the grade reports were handed out to the children. And parents' evenings are scheduled by the class teachers based on demand and assessment by the class teacher.

(23) The teacher thinks that the parents will not negatively react to a potential arrival of refugee children, mostly because the vast majority is itself foreign and with migration background. How exactly the distribution of refugee children on schools takes or will take place exceeds the knowledge of the teacher but she doubts that the parents at her school would be seriously bothered.

(24) Concerning unexpected or unwanted reactions with regard to the arrival of refugee children, the teacher expects an increasing dissatisfaction from the city population. Plans were revealed that talked about settling refugees in container buildings in the school's city district. By now the plans seem to be to send the children to neighboring primary schools.

(-) The city has a large amount of shareholder and joint partners with regard to assisting refugee and migrant families. The schools are given leaflets and information brochures which are forwarded to the parents. And many families also make use of them. The advertised offers can then be ordered by the city hall: the offer reaches from lunch to sport activities, homework assistance and so on.

(25) – “Little Rules”, something like “We are nice to each other”, “We care for our school”, “We help each other”. The school set up a contract between child, parents and school and which is signed by all parties in the first year of primary school. In this contract those rules are laid out and should be respected. Those rules have to be discussed and mentioned oftentimes and anew.

(26) Turkish and Bulgarian people tend to bring forward some negative attitudes towards each other which can also include racist or discriminating statements. Here, the teacher sees some problems but overall the situation seems to be alright. The teacher thinks that negative perceptions are mainly due to the family's and the parents' perceptions and arise less from the pupils themselves.

(27) It depends a little bit where the children mention such discriminating or racist statements. Usually the classes have their own „class councils“ or „class consultation meetings“ during which such incidents are brought forward and discussed and negotiated. In the first and second grade, there is an obligatory social training for all pupils. In such trainings they are especially made aware of possibilities to keep a peaceful interaction with each other. For more severe incidents, the school also has mediating hours. Teacher can then send pupils to mediating trainings which works again on the basis of a contract between the child and the teacher. In severe cases, the child's parents are also informed about the incident.



(28) How is dealt with stereotypes and prejudices was asked – according to the perception of the teacher, this needs to be discussed with the affected pupil. The behavior needs to be made a topic of discussion. Consequently, most of the time it is the class teacher's responsibility to confront the pupil and talk about it.

(29) The teacher explained that newcomers are usually forced to jump in at the deep end when it comes to getting to know the school building, the everyday school routine and the system. At the same time, she stresses that in almost no cases this led to problems because there are always at least one or two pupils who develop sympathy for the newly arrived kid and wonderfully take care of it. The teacher mentions one recent example where one girl cared for the new one like a mother. There was no shyness or negative or stressful excitement involved because she did such a good job. Day by day they get used to the school setting a little more, says the teacher based on her experiences. It can happen that in other cases it is somewhat more difficult but class teachers do pay attention to the way the newcomers behave and get used to the circumstances.

(30) The school, or the individual teachers, can at any time request a translator from the school authority. It's the school authority's obligation to provide the school with a translator if needed. For the Bulgarian children, for example, a Bulgarian lady visits the school once a week, and usually when clarifications etc with parents are scheduled. When the children are older, usually when they are in the fourth grade and about to switch to another school, they are often the ones to translate for their parents. One example from the scope of experience of the teacher includes the task of a fourth grade girl to translate between her parents and the school principal of the new secondary school. This worked, according to the teacher, very well. Problems arising from miscommunications based on a lack of language knowledge happens barely at the school. Beneficial are obviously the Turkish teachers as well as the Bulgarian staff who are in the school, and in many cases, the parents bring their own translator to meetings at school. They often know someone who is able to translate in such situations and who can accompany them. In only very few cases, the teachers need to find a translator / request a translator from the school authority themselves.

(31) In the school there are not really events, or activities which really celebrate the cultural diversity. The teacher could not think of some. For culturally or religiously related holidays, the affected children get the day(s) off. Last year, the school organized a Christmas tree again, for the first time in a while – because the school considered it to be part of the German culture.

(32) Since the children are from the first day in school used to the cultural diversity and the multiculturalism, it is not really necessary to educate or confront them with the differences- they are used to it.

They learn the right handling with each other on the basis of the daily interactions.

Children who did not grow up with such a mixture of cultures and nationalities in their classes and environment, are likely going to have, according to the teacher, problems with children who are different in their cultural upbringing or beliefs.

(40) The teacher got the impression that it would be hard for the school to still change something with regard to integrating refugee children. For the simple reason that they are for so many years now dealing with migration children that they are able to take care really well of them and many structures are already intact.

(33) The School does not have morning prayers or some kind of morning assemblies and ton include everyday routines is up to the class teachers. The interviewed teacher, for instance, employs a farewell ritual. Catching hands. Before the children leave the classroom at the end of the school day, the "Wochenchef" (boss of the week) starts to gently grab the right or left neighbor's hand who passes on this grab to his neighbor. This is done until the hand grab reaches the first pupil again who then wishes the whole class something nice for the afternoon. In the teacher's class this is really done every single day and during the process of passing on the hand grab, no one is allowed to talk. Even though some pupils, especially boys when they have to pass on the grab to a girl, who tend to argue about the ritual's implementation, all children participate and really enjoy it. No matter what

has happened during the day, how turbulent or stressful it was, this measure helps the whole class to calm down, provides a reassuring feeling and ends the morning in a nice manner. The teacher is quite convinced that most teachers have certain routines or rituals of which they make use in their classes and mentions a so called morning circle of which she has heard from a colleague.

(34) The teacher thinks that the integration process into the German society fostered through the school institution.

The teacher can speak of her experience in the city part where her city is located. There, hardly any Germans live or go shopping or spend their time. The rest of the city's population is not very well informed about what is going on in this city district – unless something happens that is regarded worth mentioning in the newspaper.

In other residential areas could native Germans actively be involved but due to the lack of natives in the respective area, it is hard to find Germans that could be involved.

Only a small number of Germans do actually have connections to this part of the city and will avoid going there for no reason.

(35) The teacher evaluates a school's contribution to the possibility to settle in the new country as very important (with regard to refugee children). To help the child to learn the language and provide security and stability. The teacher thinks that the school's contribution to regaining a sense of belonging will most likely depend on the environment where the child is resettled into. The neighboring population living around (the school) plays a crucial role as well. Also important saw the teacher the support for social and emotional development. And here, the teacher stresses, it is of need and importance to include the refugee children's parents. Their trust has to be gained. As a side remark, she stated that moving too many refugee families in the same area cannot function too well. Promoting structure and routine was considered to be very important as well by the teacher.

(36) It was asked which learning or school environment may be best for the integration of a refugee child. The teacher plead for a mixed school rather than a fully white or fully homogenous school.

But the major hurdle is once again the defensive attitude of many inhabitants against refugee children in their neighborhoods and in their schools. That is, according to the teacher's perception, the reason for which such mixed school approaches may fail to be realized. For the future she sees big problems in this respect.

Even foreign parents mention in talks with the teachers that they want to avoid that their own children go to schools with particularly many "foreigners" – despite the fact that those parents are officially part of the same group. Often this claim is made because they aim to get their children out of this kind of ghetto where they currently live in.

[47:45 – 48:28 off protocol]

What the teacher observed is the huge amount of ambition and willingness of refugee children to learn and to be successful. Especially the girls, for instance those from Somalia, are really willing and fast in learning. In this school's case that is true to a lesser extent for the Bulgarian pupils. Many of them are Bulgarian Turks, also called Roma, who were in their home already part of the lower social classes. Initially they had very few financial support. And boys are rather brutal and it takes more time. Newcomers with little to none language skills are for two years exempt from grading in subjects where language plays a major role. They do, however, receive evaluations from their language support teacher.

The ones who were born in Germany don't seem to speak too much in their mother tongue- at least with regard to the observations from the teacher. It is then more the Bulgarians who are not capable of expressing themselves in German yet. The worse they speak German, the more often they make use of their mother tongue. And most children who grew up in Germany it is not a big problem to switch between their mother tongue when they talk to their parents and German when they answer the teacher.

(36) The question was whether German or native German pupils could also benefit from migrant or refugee pupils in their classrooms and the teacher thinks that this would definitely be the case for benefitting socially. Hereby she means that the native children can take care and look after the newcomers and share with them the knowledge with they have already gained. This is of course also true for rather mixed and multicultural classrooms. The teacher does not believe that natives would suffer from the attendance of such newcomers. It would not be the case that German children have to level down their way of expressing themselves or something like that.

(38) It was asked for the estimation of the teacher's own up-to-date knowledge about educating and caring for refugee children. The interview partner said she would not behave too differently because she trusts the way in which the principal managed the situations so far. Especially with regard to the *Intensivklassen* in which they stay for a short time to get the basic introduction and afterwards they already join their peers in the regular classes. Newly arrived refugee children will start with closely observing everything in the beginning. And there will be enough smaller tasks with which one can already keep them entertained in class. They may get tasks on a computer etc. The teacher believes that learning the language is obviously the most important requirement to actively participate in class. For them, learning the language is of utmost importance but being warmly welcomed is also crucial.

(39) For their own school, the teacher does not see major problems for accommodating refugee children. She says she cannot speak for other schools though. They will have to develop a concept how they want to help them to learn the language. The teacher is confident that classes can always manage to take care of a new student, every child will usually find one or two friends.

(40) It was asked which is deemed to necessary for the school to enable a successful integration. The teacher stated the importance of maintaining the *Intensivklassen* in the way they exist already. However, the educational authorities for the Federal State seem to think about making changes.

Apparently, the idea would be to put all newcomer pupils in a separate class and don't distribute the children onto regular classes like it is the situation at the moment.

The school is an all-day school meaning that the children have the opportunity to stay longer at school and to attend extra-curricular activities. Many of those activities, dancing, acrobatics playing sports together are also non-verbal activities which can easily be joined by refugee children. This already supports the integration processes. Children get lunch at the school if they stay for the afternoon. Three different meals are offered per day and eating habits of pupils are taken into account.

### **Additional Conversation**

Lack of teachers? According to the perception of the state capital, there are enough teachers. The teacher herself thinks that a couple of more additional teachers would be a good idea and a help. With additional teaching staff one could keep a smaller size of, especially the lower grades, and 10 hours per week additional German classes for up to 8 children per class. Some more hours would be helpful.

Sometimes it seems like schools also need to be spontaneous and think of solutions which may not be typical solutions under normal circumstances. The teacher mentioned how a young boy from grade one constantly interrupted the lesson, did not pay attention and was a real troublemaker. The boy was then put in a fourth grade class for where he all of a sudden behaved well, was busy with some smaller tasks that he was already capable of doing. The teacher was positively surprised how well the children among each other care in such circumstances. Since this new environment among the older pupils seemed to benefit the younger Bulgarian boy and served his behavior, the teachers decided to let him stay in this fourth grade until the end of the school year.

The teacher also explains that it may be possible to include more refugee

children into the school but due to the enormous share of migrants who already live in the neighborhood.

The teacher stressed as well that children really need to feel comfortable in their learning environment before they can actually make learning progress.

The presentation of their home countries or the countries of their parents led to an intense questioning round, for example when an Afghan girl talked about the need to wear a headscarf etc.

The teacher also stated that there are always many pupils who really have a good feeling for the German language who simply need to be offered new expressions and words. Then, the teacher said, one can soon detect developments.

An additional question which came up in the course of the conversation, asked for new, young teachers' ability to deal with such a mixed classroom. The teacher answered that she doesn't think they have problems with that and usually they are delighted by the kids, but according to her judgment, the young teachers teach not enough hours in the classes. Since new regulations allow teachers to reduce their amount of teaching hours a lot, there are teachers who only spent few hours in the class. Such a trend is not advantageous for the children who are really in need to have a reference or contact person in the form of their class teacher. She observes that teachers who don't spend as many hours in their classes as it would be necessary, have less cohesion within their classes.

She also observes that many parents have own problems, a large number of pupils live with only one parent and some children really ask for a hug or some attention from their female class teachers – because they lack this kind of attention at home, due to the absence of for example a mother.

Newcomers also receive a little welcoming folder in which they receive main information about the school and the school life.

Every week, there is a conference for each grade year during which the respective grade teachers discuss about common issues and plan ahead topics which are going to be taught in class or how they will evaluate tests.

Round tables also exist: Possibility to attend additional meetings to which a teacher can go if he deals with an extraordinary troubleshooter or problematic child. During those meetings a variety of counsellors and teachers think about possible solutions.

## Summary of answers filled in the questionnaire form by a teacher at school 1 – Teacher for German as a Second/Foreign Language

Questionnaire received on: 06.06.2016

(1) The teacher studied elementary school education which she finished with the first and second state examination. Afterwards she added the master study “German as second and foreign language” to her education.

(2) Next to her mother tongue German, the teacher learned English and French as foreign languages and acquired knowledge in the Spanish language (during her work as Aupair).

(3) At school 1 she teaches two German intensive courses with groups of 13 pupils each. In addition, she teaches a regular class with 22 pupils in the social study course. (4)

(5) The German intensive groups are taught every day, from Monday to Friday, for 90 minutes. She teaches in the regular class two times a week for 60 minutes.

(6) The primary school pupils in the German intensive courses can be divided into language levels ranging from A1 (language learning beginners) to B1. The regular classes comprise a wider variety, namely from A1 to C2 (mother tongue level).

(7) Regarding the question about the performance range in the classes and to which extent the teacher needs to differentiate in order to adequately support the pupils in their learning processes, the teacher answered that, due to the vast differences between the children's' language levels, she usually has to differentiate between five and six times.

(8) The teacher also teaches children who start off with having no German language skills at all.

(8a) In such cases she communicates with mimic and gestures, with picture cards, bilingual books and with the help of other children who can translate into the mother tongue. In addition, she can communicate with those who not speak German yet by making use of her English and Spanish language skills, the Turkish teacher or the Bulgarian cultural mediator. Available voluntary translators are also taken into account.

(8b) The teacher states that she does not learn sentences like expressing the need to go to the toilet or common phrases of civility or greetings since those are the expressions which are usually picked up by the children the fastest. She, herself, learns greetings and idioms which ask for the state of well-being of the children (How are you? I am fine, I am not doing well etc.) and numbers in the range of 20 as well as word for family relationships etc.

(9) The next question asked for the usage of non-verbal learn methods and materials. The teacher referred to her answer in question 8a and explained that all teaching methods, even though they are already obvious through the non-verbal method (picture material in the forms of photographs or drawings), are complemented verbally.

(10) The teacher experienced best learning results with strict routines which structure the day. All actions are verbally accompanied/ expressed by herself. Consequent repeating and practicing, for example also in pairs, enable the children to consolidate the vocabulary.

(11) The teacher answered that she sees differences regarding the motivation of pupils to learn the German language. Often, it is more difficult to motivate children who stem from rather uneducated home.

(12) Another question referred to the way by which the teacher includes the children's mother tongues into the lessons. The teacher replied that those languages are implemented into the lessons on a daily basis. Rituals like greetings, saying goodbye, wishing to enjoy the meal, attendance counting are examples for essential elements. For every topic that is discussed in class, children write down bilingual vocabulary lists. Bilingual dictionaries are also used by the children on a daily basis. The teacher added her

personal assessment with regard to including mother tongues in the German as second language lessons: for her including those languages is crucial because it fosters building and creating an identity and motivates the children.

(13) The teacher associates the word “refugee child” with individual children from her learn groups.

(14) The teacher has already taught refugee children and observes differences between children with and without refugee background with regard to participation and settling in the group, with regard to the social interaction with her as teacher as well as to other(14a) She sees, however, no difference in the ability to learn. First and foremost, when teaching refugee children, it is important to deal with traumata and the intercultural sensitization. Also because the children are psychologically impaired in their previous experiences on the run.

(15) The teacher would need more support from psychologists, who are not familiar with treating traumata but also able to communicate with the refugee children and the parents in their home languages.

(16) It was asked how the teacher receives information about the children's refugee background and the teacher stated that she has conversations with the parents during which, with the help of translators, she is informed about the backgrounds and the flight experiences.

(17) The teacher herself would evaluate her own knowledge skills about refugees as “good”.

(18) When asked for the biggest challenges regarding teaching and looking after refugee children, the teacher names the psychological burdens as well as the non-educated background of parents.

(19) The teacher thinks that, next to child psychologists, the school is in also in need for street worker.

(20) The teacher believes that on higher educational levels capacities for smaller learn groups need to be established and created and team-teaching situations have to be created.

(21) It was asked in how far the teacher's school is regarded to have an impact on the integration processes of refugee children. The teacher thinks that her school strongly contributes to the integration process, for example by the intensive language classes. All children are also part of a regular class meaning that children with German as first and those with German as second language get into contact. Furthermore, she sees the whole-day care concept of her school as an advantage which fosters as well a strong integration.

(22) The teacher evaluates following aspects to be important for schools to provide, offer and enable to refugee children:

- the possibility to settle in the new country
- assisting to regain a feeling of belonging
- supporting the social and emotional development of the children
- encouraging/ supporting structure and routine in the lives of the refugee children
- quick language acquisition

An extensive knowledge mediation is not regarded as one of the most important aspects.

(23) The last question was about the assessment regarding allocating children to either homogenous or heterogeneous classrooms. The teacher would opt for a mixed classroom, consisting of foreign and native pupils.

(23a) The teacher explains her reasoning in the following way: Native German children serve as language models and support a natural and non-compulsive way of learning the language. The teacher underpins her assessment with study results regarding bilingual language acquisition by Heidi Rösch et. al. Additionally, she refers to her own observations based

on her daily teaching practice. Also, children with different native languages support the refugee children in various ways, for example with their arrival in the new school setting – emotionally and socially.

(23b) According to her perception, all pupils, regardless of their origin, benefit from a heterogeneous classroom.

## SCHOOL 2

### Summary of the interview at school 2: Teacher

Interview conducted: 03.06.2016

#### Additional questions from the principal question set:

(2) Currently, the school teaches 320 pupils in the classes 1 to 4.

(3) The pupils represent ten to fifteen nationalities.

(4) 48% of the pupils have a migration background.

(5) 22 teachers teach at this school.

(The school teaches refugee children over 2 years.)

#### Questions from the teacher question set:

(1) The class in which the teacher currently taught is a second grade class composed of 29 pupils of which 15 have a migration background (2) meaning that the percentage of children with migration background lays at around 50 percent in her class (3). The class is taught by five different teachers (4). The school employs special teachers are employed at the school for the so-called inclusion children (children who usually have some kind of disability) and additionally integration assisting staff. Those persons are not only responsible for one single child but for the whole class and are constantly present in the classroom. Consequently, the class is supervised

by two persons. The integration assistant staff is not an official teacher but regarded as such from the children.

(5) The teacher, who has herself parents from a foreign country, sees it as an advantage if teachers have a migration background or speak the language of refugee children, mostly with regard to facilitating the communication between child and teacher. Unfortunately, there are too few teachers with migrant background around. Also at this school, no teachers with refugee or migration background are present.

(6) The youth welfare office was named to be currently the only institution in the city to work closely together with the school. Issues which involve the youth welfare office are generally, and regardless of existent migration background, oftentimes related to negligence in a child's home.

(7 & 8) At the moment, there are also 12 refugee children attending the regular classes, distributed to all four grade levels. Countries from which they stem, include, according to her knowledge, Syria, Rumania and Albania. The teacher got to teach one refugee child in a third grade and is also confronted with other refugee children in the teaching situations in classes where she serves as substitute.

(9) The first association with the term "refugee child" was "personal fate", the fate and traumata accompany the child, also she associates the sensitivity in contact and handling which are required.

(10) The first contact with the topic refugee children in primary school was experienced during her time in teacher training. Beforehand, during her studies, the topic of refugee children in regular classes was not made a subject of discussion. She could not remember of having had the option to opt for a course to deal with this or a similar topic. The progress of learning reading and writing was obviously taught but not in the context of children who are not literate in the German language. Thus, the major information about refugee children in classes were really obtained in practice and by experiencing the everyday situations with the newcomers at school.

(11) The school offers information about refugees for teachers. Parents receive information often through helping and participation but there are no

workshops presentations for parents organized. One colleague visits seminars dealing with German as second language and informs her colleagues about the content afterwards.

(12) The teacher explained that the major difference she sees between children with migrant background and refugee children is that migration background pupils can express what they think or feel while this is very difficult for refugee children (who are in the beginning not able to express themselves in language that is understood in the classroom). Furthermore, the teacher mentions the materials in the classes. Since the refugee children participate in the regular classes rather than being educated in separate welcoming or integration classes, they are confronted with the regular lessons hold in German which makes it hardly possible for them to actually and actively participate.

Refugee children receive additional German language lessons 1 up to two hours per day. In that time, they leave their regular class and sit in a German-as-second-language-classroom. Afterwards they join their peers for the regular classes again. Again the teacher stresses that there are still about four hours remaining during which the children need some kind of occupation as well. It is challenging for the class teachers to provide the children with work, also again due to the lack of adequate materials. Consequently, the teachers give them something to draw, or other little tasks to keep them busy. The teacher stated that one is still far from saying that everything works out well.

(13) The teacher was confronted with the statement from researchers that pupils who don't speak the language of the host country yet and don't have experience with reading or writing shall first become literate in their mother tongue before doing so in the new language. She replied that she already read about it in didactics courses but she was not entirely sure what to think about it. She thinks that it also depends on the environment: for example, when a child knows the environment (because it was born in the country but maybe just not raised in this country's language) it may have less problems to start reading and writing in the particular language than e.g. refugee

children for whom everything is entirely new and who may bring with them shocking experiences. For them it may actually be more helpful to start off the literate process in their mother tongue.

(14) The school does not label signs or certain objects in the particular languages of the children. Only the entrance is decorated with welcoming signs in the language from the represented nations. The classroom for teaching German as second language contains additional signs with signal words but they refer more to grammar rules and are in German.

(15) Teachers don't know (she can probably not speak for everyone but at least for herself and the general perception she got) greetings of polite phrases in the refugee children's' mother tongues.

(16) In the previous school year, the teacher taught two refugee girls, one from Albania and one from Rumania and included the topic flight in the curriculum. Since the girls were at that state already speaking German rather fluently, they could actively be involved in the teaching process and told about their experiences and backgrounds.

(17) The curriculum includes the topic "Heterogeneity as a chance" and therefore officially legitimizes to include a topic like seeking refuge and fleeing. The teacher sees enough pedagogical freedom to touch upon the refugee topic. She thinks that especially if you teach a class with two or three refugee children, it is reasonable to actively deal with this topic in class.

(18) Differentiated teaching methods are always used by the teacher, regardless of whether a child needs to be challenged with more difficult tasks or, reversely, easier tasks or whether the workload need to be higher or lower for a child. The teacher believes that one probably cannot teach without differentiating in levels of difficulty and workload.

(19) The school does not compose over a school-intern psychologist. However, there are school relations to external doctors and an external psychologist. The teacher did not know in how far it could be translated between a refugee child and a doctor.



(20) When the class teacher realizes that a child suffers from psychological complaints, he or she is the one who will launch the process of contacting psychological help or the doctor. Usually the consent of the parents is required. The teacher experienced most parents as very cooperative and willing to engineer help.

(21) Any newly arrived pupil at the school is coupled to a peer. In the case of refugee children, it is usually two other children who take care, introduce and help the newcomer with all kind of everyday school matters. This matching is organized to facilitate the acclimatization with the school and the environment.

(22) The question to which extent and how parents of newcomers are introduced to the school, the educational system and rules did not really cover the scope of knowledge of the teacher. She knows that teachers are usually present when they register their child but the teacher also heard from incidents where the communication between school staff and parents is hampered due to language barriers. The school does not have means to translate ad hoc for parents.

(23) According to the teacher's perceptions there are certainly parents who appreciate that the school teaches refugee children, especially when the knowledge exists that learning a language and getting used to a new environment is facilitated by being in contact with other children. On other hand, there are parents who see that more critical, especially out of concerns that the lessons are severely interrupted and that the learning progress of their children could suffer. The teacher thinks that information and clarification, for example how the classes look like, helps best to encounter parental skepticism. Also stronger performing children can benefit from refugee children in their class: their social competences can be improved, they can help the newcomers.

(24) The teacher did not notice any increasing interest in the schools from the side of media or additional requests for data collection or analysis since refugee children entered the school.

(25) The school asks pupils and parents to sign a contract with the school in the first year of entering the school. In this so called educational contract,

the school's rules are listed (such rules include basic rules about learning with and treating each other in a nice, respectful manner, that children are accompanied by their parents only to the main entrance etc). The rules are supported by images, rules that clearly prohibit racism or discrimination are not included yet but the teacher said that adding such rules to the contract would not cause problems.

(26 & 27) The teacher said that she was not aware of any fights or bullying incidents rooted in issues about racism or discrimination. Children play together and know that in games like soccer etc. the skin color or language doesn't matter.

(28) The teacher thinks that depends on the grade how one talks about prejudices and stereotypes. In the fourth grade one could already very openly discuss. And they were already very mature. Some children seemed to voice their parents' attitudes. The teacher thinks that, as soon as it is noticed that children are educated and mature enough, one can definitely talk and discuss about it in class. Most children also showed large interest in talking about it.

(29) Usually new children will be introduced to the school building and the everyday school life by their coupled peers. During the breaks they are shown around and additionally the class teachers take care that the newcomers get to know the school and the timetable. Translating the timetable in English, also when explaining it to the parents, shall avoid misunderstandings or miscommunications. In some cases, the task of showing around is also be done by the supervisor.

(30) Translation between the children's mother tongue and German is done by the children themselves as soon as their German skills are advanced enough to grasp what is said. The teacher is definitely of the opinion that more translation means are needed! The school board may be able to provide the schools with external translators but the teacher herself was not sure whether her school had ever announced such a request. She highly doubts that such requests would result in success because of the demand exceeds the offer.

(31) Typical multicultural events which uphold and celebrate cultural diversity are not employed in the school but as an element of the social science classes the topic “festivities and events”. The teacher sees this subject as good possibility to embed the outline of different, cultural diverse festivities. As example she mentions the “Sugar Feast” with which all children are familiar. In general, the teacher observes a large curiosity among the pupils.

(32) The teacher would agree to the statement that children at this school are educated in a multicultural manner. She also states that the awareness may also be related to the pupils’ composition and the share of almost 50% of children with migrant background. According to the teacher this plays a role.

(33) The teacher could not think of any (daily) routines that are implemented in the school days. She mentioned that children have breakfast together but didn’t see it as a routine herself.

(34) Regarding the role that the schools play in the process of integration for the refugee children, the teacher said that she sees a difference for various children. Some take the opportunities to a big extent, learn fast, have fun and are engaged, while other children are hard to motivate and refuse themselves to participate and to learn. For latter cases the teacher sees difficulties in having those children in regular classes. They may be better taught in separate classes where even closer supervision is guaranteed (groups of eight are maybe already too big for children with those special language and psychological needs). At her school, she thinks, an additional class for refugee newcomers would really help many children.

(35) The teacher regards school as very important when it comes to the school’s share in providing the possibility to settle in the new country. She also considers the school’s share with regard to regaining a feeling of belonging as very important. Supporting of emotional and social development is judged to be very important as well. Supporting structure and routine in the life of a refugee child was seen even more important than the previous aspects. Quickly learning the language was regarded to be important with the comment of where else to properly learn the host

country’s language if not at school. A more extensive knowledge promotion was obviously seen as an important task of schools but in comparison with other aspects, for refugee children simply gaining factual knowledge may be less important in the beginning.

(36) In terms of allocating refugee children to rather homogenous or heterogeneous schools, the teacher would opt for a heterogeneous school. She thinks that in homogenous schools, prejudices are more widely spread and more difficult to eliminate. According to her own experiences and perceptions, children with migration background tend to be somewhat more tolerant and open-minded towards other newcomer children and with regard to their willingness to support.

In general, the teacher thinks that all children, regardless of their ethnical background, would benefit from a mixed classroom.

(37) Getting to know about the background of refugee children can differ. Sometimes teachers receive information through conversations with parents, provided that they speak English. For other children the fate and background is initially rather anonymous and only with time passing some information are revealed. The teacher mentioned one example of when she got to know about the death of a girl’s father during the flight in class. She received this information in a coincident and wasn’t aware of it before.

(38) The teacher evaluated her own knowledge about teaching and caring for refugee children to date as bad. She would wish for more guidance and information.

She would like to attend more seminars herself in order to learn how to best work with those kids in order to prevent that the kids are just being given random tasks in order to keep them busy and occupied.

(39) The major problem is seen to be the language barrier.

(40) For a more successful integration at her school, the teacher would ask for more personnel support and more and better material.

(41) The teacher said that, according to her, adjustment of refugee children to the school environment is facilitated when there is only one refugee child in the class because it enhances the pressure to adapt to the classroom,

pick up the language and integrate. Even though this perception may contradict the idea of welcome or starter classes.

In some cases, the teacher also experienced character traits like ambition, diligence and motivation. She mentioned one example where a young boy in grade one asked her in proper English to explain a task. The teacher herself was very surprised and did not expect to hear those English skills from this little lad.

## SCHOOL 3

### Summary of the interview at school 3: Principal

Interview conducted: 10.06.2016

(1) The principal leads the school since 2000.

(2) Currently, 187 pupils attend the school. According to the grouping of school sizes this resembles a medium-sized school (small schools until 180 pupils, medium-sized schools until a pupil population until 360 and 360 and more pupils belong to the category large schools)

The school is a special school for joint learning which means that first grade classes usually don't comprise more children than 24. Other schools, in contrast, also have classes with up to 29 pupils in grade 1.

(3) There are usually between 10 and 15 nationalities represented at the school. However, the connotation nationality can lead to confusion, because Turkey has itself already several different nationalities. In a less strict sense, the pupils represent, among others, Turkey, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands, Guinea, Iran, Syria, Lebanon or Hungary.

(4) More than 80 percent of the pupils have a migration background.

(5) The question about the employed personnel cannot be answered as easily as one may expect. The school leader distinguishes between actual primary school teachers (13x including 1 who takes a parent break), special pedagogues (3x) and a social pedagogue for pre-primary education (1x). For the all-day school care, there are additionally two teachers, two social pedagogues, one educator and one family assistant. Furthermore, external teachers come to the school to teach mother tongue classes in Arabic, Dutch and Turkish as well as Syrian-Orthodox and Islamic religious education. Several interns are also part of the school team.

(6) One primary school teacher is of Aramean descendant.

(7) Almost all teachers who teach German as Second language are normal primary school teachers. The school has only one colleague who has an actual related education in that regard. It is not uncommon that the teachers just have to work themselves into the challenges. Refugee children are distributed to regular classes but receive additional German intensive lessons in one of three groups (A,B,C) according to their knowledge level. This was at least the initial differentiation. It is difficult to stick to this grouping which is why the groups are more related to class and age levels. Newly arrived children receive more hours of additional lessons than those who are already longer staying in Germany. The school distinguishes between the normal "German as a Second Language" (DAZ) classes and the "German as a Second Language Intensive Support" (DIF). Due to the arrival of the refugees and their educational and language needs, the standard DAZ program had to be reduced because otherwise the system would not have worked out anymore. (The principal told about other schools who had to entirely stop the normal DAZ program which is not okay, according to the principal) Especially at school 3, stopping the normal DAZ support lessons would be impossible due to the large amount of migrant pupils who depend on this help.

The school's support system is based on the pillars:

- 1) DAZ external (this represents the A, B and C intensive groups which take place outside the regular classes)

- 2) DAZ integration (here, an additional teacher joins the regular class and supports as an additional teaching force)
- 3) DIF: related to very basic needs, for example if a child has to become literate with the letters etc. (3 groups at the school)

The school really tries to teach the groups with the same teachers but this does not work out all the time.

(8) Apart from the Aramean teacher, and the external teachers for the mother tongue classes, the school has an educator of the all-day schooling team who can speak Russian. Beyond those, the school does not have personnel which could teach or communicate with children in their original language. The principal would appreciate teachers who can communicate with the children in the mother tongue. Accessing the children is completely different than when addressing them in their second language which is often being spoken in a rudimentary way. A problem with children who are brought up in a bilingual language environment is that many don't speak any of the languages really properly. They speak mixes. They don't speak proper German, nor proper mother tongue. Moreover, in several cases it is impossible to detect a real mother tongue. Sometimes parents speak different languages or the family agreed on a common family language, e.g. English, which is not the mother tongue of either parent.

(9) Yes, the principal sees the advantage of having teachers with own migration or foreign background.

The school is called a „school in a city district with certain need for renewal“ which is also known as a socially sensitive or problematic area. Many families need vast help in developing parenting concepts meaning that the standards are not very high.

There is also Germany community which is for example very much engaged in the local sports association and which also foster a successful integration. Integration is actually lived. But from the amount of migrant families and also social backgrounds, it is a tough area.

(10) An important institution for cooperation is the city's counselling office for foreign and resettled children. On behalf of the school authority, this

office is responsible for the allocation of refugee children to the schools which works well. (Usually this task is done by school boards in the respective areas but this can lead to difficulties due to decentralist aspects).

Next to that, the school is in contact with the school administration office of the city in the department school, youth and sport. The youth category also involves cooperation with the youth welfare office.

The city has an integration commissioner who works together with the school as well. The city has a concept for tackling the challenges related to the refugee situation by cooperating as a general network rather than holding responsible a single institution.

The principal mentioned the cooperation with the surrounding kindergartens. Lastly, a city district centrum plays a smaller role as well.

(11) Currently, the school accommodates 19 refugee children from Syria, Hungary, Russia, Rumania, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Guinea and Iraq.

(12) First associations with the term „refugee child“: the need to help this child. And first of all one need to retrieve information about the country of origin, the reasons for the flight and collect information about potential prior education experiences. Here, the contact and communication with the counselling office is necessary.

(13) The school does not organize workshops, or seminars themselves but participates in such offers, for example offers from the city. Furthermore, round tables and working groups are established. One working group covers the topic of German as a second language and also touches upon refugee children. In general, refugee children touch upon any category in the school life.

Communication, exchange of thought and experiences, worries, needs is a big part of the school's working attitude. The school really acts as a team which is indispensable for achieving results.

(14) Migration and Refugee children compared: What refugee children tend to bring along more is fears, especially when they left war zones, and traumata. (One example of a child who is fled with his dad. His mother and

siblings are, however, still in the war zone.) Other DAZ children face what other children face, too, including family separation, little money and this is similar with refugee children. But refugee children arrived and stayed in gyms for example and face a totally new environment, culture and language. (Example of one Hungarian child who also got traumatized after finding out that it was sent to the Grandmother in Germany because neither the mother, nor the father wanted to take of their son. But it is a different trauma than the one of children that experienced a long flight and war or saw how family members were killed.)

With regard to needs at school: refugee children are often not literate and familiar with western letters. Also it is really, really difficult to get across possible special needs and the process of discovering those needs usually lasts longer than normally.

(16) Freedom of decision making: He, as a principal, doesn't restrict the teachers. That is not the way it works. They sit together and ask themselves how one can handle certain situations and everyone learns from each other. The teachers share material or what they have found or read online. The principal talked about the booklet which contains a variety of pictures out of all situations in daily life. One cannot regularly order it from the publisher, so the principal managed to get a couple of exemplars himself and distributed them to the children and the colleagues. Oftentimes, he or the teachers engage privately and then share what they've got with the team. There is nothing which the principal dictates on his teachers. It has to be found a way and searching for it is done collectively. There is no strict schedule how to literate and teach a refugee child. Also for the reason that they are so different from each other. It is possible that you deal with 6 refugee children who need six different explanations and teaching materials.

What is in particular wrong to believe is the thought to "get through" the prescribed content for a grade. The children are always first priority. (He also protects his colleagues who may run behind the recommended schedule due to learning delays in a previous grade. The teacher is not a bad teacher for such a reason. A classical teaching-in-front-style is usually not possible in the school's classes. (17) New teachers usually need

between half a year and a year to realize that the methods and theoretical teaching styles they learned during their study may not work in practice.

The new teachers are also assisted in fighting their way through. It is all about the team!

Also what teachers have to realize, similar to educating disabled children, it can be that a child steps one step ahead in the learning process but not without also making a step to the right, half one back and two steps diagonally.

(18) The school does not have a school-own psychologist. The principal would love to have one but that is an illusion. Through the connection with the educational counselling office, the school can access a psychologist. Also one psychologist is responsible for the school over the "Schulberatungsstelle". So far, however, she was not yet contacted in terms of matters for refugee children.

The principal made clear that there is no way to guarantee that the school can assure the psychological needs of refugee children. No school can do that. Yes, he as a principal receives help for refugee children – just like he receives help for his other pupils.

(19) The school has a counselling concept based on which it is possible offer counselling on several levels. It is possible to talk to the counselor teacher, within the class team, with a colleague in the all-day schooling team. Then it is discussed to which institutions one can send parents for help. If the school personnel cannot find a solution, one can ask the educational counseling (*Erziehungsberatungsstelle*) office for help for help.

(20) Concerning a mentoring system employed at the school, the principal explained that this is mostly done in the individual classes. There is no strict system but one can match children to specific peers when one knows who could especially assist a child in its first weeks or months. It is always tried to make sure that no child is left alone. Next to that: third graders are mentors for new first grade pupils.

(21) School-parent liaison: Usually, refugee children are treated like all the other children. Parents need to fill in a form, also asking for permissions

about taking pictures of the children, sending them to the training room (= a time-out for children, pedagogical guided, for situations where children leave the classroom after having been involved in a conflict) and so on. If information cannot be retrieved immediately, they will be added to the form later.

The school tries to meet the parents in person and get to know what is known about the refugee situation. Sometimes the flight experience really marks the parents.

Translating information is often considered to be a problem. The city published a school guide in several, commonly presented, languages. But the school also lacks time and resources to translate into more languages.

All classes have a parents' evening at least once a year (that is the legal standard) and beyond this, class teachers decide themselves based on relevant situations.

Recently, the school organized an action day where grandparents, parents and children were invited. Additionally, the school has established a parents' café which is currently still rather attached to the OGS but about to open for non OGS parents as well.

Generally, it is like this: if one wants to achieve a change based on parental participation, it usually doesn't work in assemblies but more in individual sessions with the parents.

To get in touch with parents, the school tries to repeatedly get in touch with them, also with varying approaches. Sometimes teachers visit the families which live close by. And one boy is often picked up for going to school in the morning because his mother cannot manage to do that herself.

The principal explains that it is a repetitive process, remaining persistent is important and necessary. Only if families really deny any bit of cooperation, the school cannot do anything.

The principal would not entirely exclude the possibility that native German parents bear resentments but usually this kind of resentments is generally more directed against individual pupils and less related to the factor

"refugee". The principal also reports from situations where great hospitality and openness prevails.

In general, if parents don't believe the teachers' judgements about their children, they can be invited into the school and receive assessment from four different pedagogical angles.

(22) With regard to consequences for the school since schooling refugees, the principal said that he has more requests for statistical data collection but increased media attention. Something which is clearly noticeable is the increased number of pedagogical challenges in a system which is already very tight, where resources are already scarce. Receiving a positive assessment through the school inspection is not that easy under the current situation.

(23) The school's ethos reads: Learning and playing together. And when the school was established, the UNO convention of the child was underlying as well. Usually, the school compared its institution with a garden: several different flowers and plants are in the same garden, sometimes there are same flowers, but all in all it can be a harmonious garden. This shall stress the diversity. And many parents give positive feedback about exactly this way of thinking. Some approached the principal and explained that they believe that their children should learn to cope with people from all kind of different countries, and cultures because that is what they going to be experience in their future anyways. Other parents, on the other hand, deliberately avoid sending their children to school 3 out of fear of "the foreigners". The principal explained that it is also wrong to speak of "so many foreigners" because the vast majority are Germans with a migration background.

For school's 3 principal, the striking thing is really the focus on together. Playing, learning, making music together. They are a school with knowledge and behavioral education whereby behavioral education is ranked first. Only a well behaved kid can be educated. Unfortunately, the principal states, this is not viewed by all teachers and parents the same way. But it is essential.

The principal is convinced that the ethos is really being lived at his school.

(24) To the extent that the principal is aware, racism and discrimination are not a big problem at his school. (25) If there are related incidents, they are made subject of problem and discussion in the class council. In a next step, the school is planning to establish a pupils' parliament. By this means, the teachers want to teach the children that with their participation, they have decision-making power. Generally, if incidents related to racism or discrimination, the parents of both victim and offender, are informed.

(26) The principal said he is rarely confronted with complaints about prejudices or stereotypes. He said that this may be different in the different classes but to his knowledge there are not many such occurrences. And this observation is also true for refugees.

Something which does bother parents is the enlargement of classes and sometimes also that with the refugee children new potential arrives. But regarding stereotypes and prejudices, the principal said, that there may be single cases but the topic simply doesn't play the role that people assume it plays.

(27) The principal said that it is of important that the children get to know their school but that this happens automatically, just by going to school and being there. He does not see a real difference between a "normal" child and a refugee child in this regard. Certainly, the group has to be nice, welcoming and supportive. Explaining the school system (to parents) is less important.

Parents are informed about the underlying basics of the schools in a parent-education contract which is currently also available in a Russian and Turkish version. But one still remains in Germany, it is impossible to adapt every single bit.

(28) In terms of translation means, the principal says that it is really difficult to have sufficient means to translate information when the particular language is in not represented at the school in any form or when it touches upon topics which cannot be translated by children.

In this one case where the school urgently needs to discuss something with the parents, it has been impossible so far to find an interpreter. The asked the Integrationsberater and other institutions, but for some languages it is

very difficult to arrange an interpreter. Also, for such occasions, you cannot take any or any random person because details and problems about the individual family life are revealed and discussed. In less specific cases, it is also normal that pupils translate.

The principal agrees that it challenges/ overextends the children and also refers to some pupils who have to take care of the entire household, siblings and translation services in town offices and so on. In this context, the principal referred to traditional role models where in some cultures girls are obliged to do such tasks because they are seen to be less worth, while boys don't for the simple reason that they are male. The Principal talked about the difficulty of translating specific pedagogical or educational terminology where the children is even more overstrained. He really asked: what shall we as school do? Some topics, which cover, certain parenting styles or familial details, have to be treated confidential so asking the children is often the best solution even though he is aware that it is hard for them.

The question whether the school would need additional translating services, the principal answered with a clear Yes, always!

The principal referred to a law which allows schools to demand an interpreter for children who are visually or hearing impaired but something similar is not assured or guaranteed yet for refugee children. That is an important missing aspect. This is absolutely necessary.

(29 & 30) Cultural diversity is really lived. Parents bake traditional sweets or prepare typical meals for school events or parents' evenings. The sugar feast is, for instance, celebrated just like Christmas. Those kind of things simply flow into the school days, for example in the morning rounds. He states that at some schools such multicultural behavior is presented to the public but not really lived. Of course, he cannot guarantee that this the case in every single class because he is not constantly around but what he gets to know on a daily basis is that it is really a part of the school.

For example, religions: children can talk in the religious education class about their religious believes and practices but that is nothing pretentious but represents the "together" in the School ethos "Learning and Playing together".

The school wants to promote the values according the concept of democracy and the German constitution while, at the same time, appreciating or acknowledging otherness.

He sees the importance of appreciating the otherness but since they live in Germany, they need to understand that certain rules apply in this country and need to be followed and are not to be negotiated. In the school contract which is signed by the parents such elements are listed as well.

(31) Routine & Structure: The school is one which tries to provide with patterns and structures to which children can hang on. And this related support can only be provided by means of structures, routines and rules. This underlying believe in providing support may be the reason that the school tries so hard to provide and get through those rules etc. It is an important component of this school. The principal said that without these components, one would not be successful because the pupils really need all their strength and time to learn and cannot afford spending additional power on adapting to changing rhythms.

Traffic lights: The educational policy is applied to any pupil in the classroom. If someone does not apply to the rules they need to learn that their behavior is related to consequences. Every child shall get the impression that I am treated equally and fairly.

In every class, one starts the day off with mentioning the date, following a certain time schedule. And repeating rituals.

(33) Integration process: The principal certainly sees the school to be involved in the integration process of refugee children. Often the school is the first institution where they get in contact with the new country and with peers. Next to learning the language, it is of great importance for refugees to arrive here and to be recognized, noticed and appreciated. This is a relevant aspect associated with the duty of the school. Other influential institutions are also sports or cultural associations, churches and societal bodies.

Not just for the children but also important for the children but also for the grown-ups. To let them know that one explains things to them, several times

if necessary, that they can ask questions and their concerns are being taken serious.

Most important: knowledge acquisition, then getting back structure and routine, the rest is equally important, having a feeling of getting a new home or feeling welcome. Really difficult because many don't know whether or if they allowed to stay in the country. Providing knowledge is of course important but facilitated by the genuine children's curiosity. The principal says that it is well possible that, once the children feel safe in their new home and got used to the circumstances, they explode in the sense that they want to make up for the time they lost on spending on learning and acquiring new knowledge.

(34) For a refugee child it is easier to attend a school like theirs, says the principal. For the reason that the school does not shy away from them, in the school composition, they don't have something particular exotic about them. School 3 is sometimes involved in fights about rules and norms about living together. He assumes that this is the case in most schools, but maybe to a lesser extent in a very rural school with many native Germans (for the reason of a greater discrepancy). But he believes integration can also be successful in rather homogenous schools. The principal would not see it as an either- or distinction but also sees chances in educating children in a small school in a village, for example. They probably have to find different ways to deal with the refugee children but may also have other capacities. There integration can be successful as well.

The principal also knows of schools with an almost entirely German population but where, due to international contacts and relations, similar openness prevails. And other schools do not do anything to support the integration of refugee children. It is comparable to different schools' approaches related to integrating and caring for disabled children.

(34) Which children benefit from heterogeneous or homogenous classrooms? In this questions, the principal read the underlying question of whether shall the children should be taught be separately or in regular



classes. School 3's principal expects a tendency in homogeneity for excluding refugee children because for pedagogues it is related to extreme challenges because of taking into account vast diversity and needs. Also the principal's colleagues reach their limits. When this happens, though, they communicate it and together it is thought about a solution. An example given by the principal referred to a boy who received individual support because that is a lot more effective for him and the entire class. By spending less time in his class, he causes less chaos and distraction.

The principal explains that such individual support is definitely not possible at all schools but related to his school's DAZ possibilities. Those possibilities are only at the school's disposal, however, because the principal made the effort to write additional contacts and invested in getting additional teaching hours. He is bothered by schools who complain about not having enough resources but if they, at the same time, refuse to write and hand in the required concepts. Making an effort is the difference. Also accepting interns is a way to somewhat more personnel.

The principal believed that in the end, it is not the factor „heterogeneity“ or „homogeneity“ which makes a difference but the way and attitude of the school leading management team to address such issues. Showing responsibility and engagement and suggesting new ways to tackle new challenges is important. The entire attitude of principal and teachers plays a big role.

(35) The principal retrieves information about the refugee families' backgrounds from the city's counselling office and from the first entrance conversations with the parents when they register their child at the school. (Side note which was made: the counselling office is with its two posts understaffed.)

(36) The principal thinks that the knowledge about the refugees and how to teach and take for them can always be improved. As a pedagogue, he constantly searches for further information anyways. Most colleagues have the same attitude and are always willing to learn more. The principal thinks that his school is rather well-established because the right mind-set and approaches towards the challenge prevail.

Something that he criticizes about the politics related to support systems, is that it seems to be impossible to use existing structures for new challenges and that over time, the previous, older, systems get forgotten.

(37) The biggest challenge which the principal associates with teaching refugee children is that they are so different from each other. He believes that they really need a group but within that group they also require individual support. And latter can hardly be granted because all of the children's fates are unique. Even though the school has relatively many resources it is still by far not enough to meet all those specific needs.

(38) According to the principal, the school needs more personnel and more money. The money would especially be spent on material. The principal explains that sometimes means for support is taken from others, resulting in less means for DAZ children for example. The principal is not fond of that development but cannot always avoid it. In general, he thinks that in North Rhine-Westphalia there is spent too little money on educational matters. Schools often rely on „Fördervereine“ (so called booster clubs) but especially for a school in a socially troubled area, the thing with *Fördervereinen* is more difficult.

(39) The principal stated that he expects the same from refugee children that he expects from other children as well when they enter the school system while, however, taking into consideration their previous experiences of flight. But other children also experienced terrible things. He recognizes that refugee children may have somewhat different needs but his school adapts to all its pupils. Each and every pupil is taken seriously. The school ethos and the underlying guidelines are also applied to all pupils and all needs are tried to be taken into account. The principal referred back once more to the openness to other cultures and values but that there is still the need for newcomers to accept that they now live in Germany where certain rules have to be followed and values accepted that are cherished and agreed on by a democratically living society. This is however expected from all pupils and parents and does not explicitly apply to refugees.

(40) An additional question asked for the relevance of an all-day schooling offer for the integration process. The principal stated that his school's all-day program is not mandatory, they are an open all-day school meaning that it is up to the parents to apply for one out of 65 spots for the afternoon classes. Currently all of those spots are taken, 30 more children are listed on a waiting list. At the moment, the school has two groups and hope for the permission to offer a third one in the new school year. Currently, the refugee children are only represented in a small share. They are also not advantaged but treated just like the other applicants. The school has to obey an order of priority but still has freedom to deviate from this reasoned ranking in pedagogical individual cases.

## Summary of the interview at school 3: Teacher

Interview conducted: 10.06.2016

(1) Currently she teaches 24 children in her regular class.

(2) It is a third grade. Seven nationalities are represented: Rumania, Russia, Turkey, Syria, Kurdish, Lebanon, Pakistani

(4) Six different teachers who teach in the class.

(5) Advantage to have teachers who can talk to the children in their mother tongue. She, herself, would want to be able to speak the children's language sometimes, and she realizes how useful it is when children speak the same language and newcomer children can be explained how certain things work which gives them a welcoming feeling. And it facilitates the communication and the children feel themselves more comfortable when they realize that there is another child or another person who speaks my language and with whom I can communicate in my mother tongue. The Rumanian girl is the only child of Rumanian descent and there the teacher realizes that it is more difficult. She also felt less comfortable because she realized that nobody spoke Rumanian. This girl arrived with rudimental German skills.

(7) The teacher teaches refugee children at school 3. She teaches 5 children in her intensive course who have a refugee background. In her regular class, there are three refugee children. The children from classical war regions stem from Syria and the Iran.

(9) The teacher's first associations with the term "refugee child" are war, poverty, fear, pictures of people on boats.

(10) First contact with the topic of refugee children was at school 3. Most of the knowledge about refugee, about the more general backgrounds, receives the teacher from the media, like tv, radio and the news, but also through the information exchange with colleagues and teacher friends. In the first place, it is really the information exchange at the school.

(11) The teacher did not attend trainings or workshops related to the topic of teaching refugee children but is member of a related working group.

(12) The teacher sees similarities in the needs of refugee children and children with migration background in terms of their language support, and also in terms of visualization of subjects is comparable. But from an emotional perspective, she sees more differences, especially with the refugee background, she believes that refugee children need more emotional support. Also, teachers need to learn to get a feeling for topics (for example war) which should not be addressed in class or how to deal with such topics.

(14) The teacher would label objects in signs in German and in the language of the refugee children.

(15) She is able to say greetings, and words in some of the children's mother tongues.

(16) The teacher sees the possibility to include topics like refugee or flight in the classes, especially in religious education. She didn't include herself so far, but knows that it is generally done. The reason for which she didn't cross upon this topic yet (in her religious class) is that the group does not have a refugee child in the classical sense. But, in general she deems it appropriate to include.

(17) She feels like she has enough decision freedom to adapt her lectures to the refugee children in her groups.

(18) She makes use of differentiated teaching methods every day but couldn't say on how many different levels this happens. '

(21) She thinks that the mentoring system between the first and third grades is a good and useful idea.

(22) Parents receive the relevant information about the school on parents' evenings and parents counseling days. The information is not translated, however. The teacher believes that the parents are invited into the school around six times per year.

(23) So far, the teacher did not experience situations which would have pointed at skepticism of native German parents towards the teaching of refugee children.

(24) Also, the teacher did not experience increased media arousal or interest in the school since they teach refugee children.

(25) The school has a school ethos and written down. Teachers and pupils are, according to the teachers, aware of this ethos. The rules and the underlying values are discussed in the class council, for example if they were disregarded or threatened. They have a stop rule, visualized, and the children are from the start on aware of those rules. Also, they are repeatedly discussed. Also arbiters are confronted with the enforcement of the rules and attitudes. The topics discrimination and racism are also tackled in the school ethos and the rules.

(26) The teacher was already confronted with arguments related to discrimination and racism but this happens only rarely. Sometimes, the children are also not fully aware of what they said and implied with their words. Conflicts related to culture or skin color happen less often than discussions and arguments about religion. Recently, they had a discussion about the Ramadan, whether one has to distinguish between good and bad Muslims based on their participation in fasting or not. Equally, discussions between Christians and Muslims appear, in the sense that the children argue which is the "better" religion.

(27) It is dealt with such issues by discussing them with the children.

(28) Stereotypes and prejudices are also discussed with the children. And pointed at differences between people and cultures. Children are also allowed to present their cultures and countries, so that this becomes part of the lessons. That they become aware of different religions and that one needs to open and tolerant towards such differences.

(30) Translation means: not concrete translation means. One teacher is Turkish, and the mother tongue education teacher (e.g. Arabic) can be asked for help as well. Children also translate for their parents and teachers. The teacher sees the need for additional interpretation services which would also facilitate the work for herself.

(31) Due to the Christian background of the school, the Christian festivities are celebrated, however, festivities from other religions are accepted and tolerated as well, they are also allowed to stay take off days when it is related to important religious holiday. And again, the teacher stresses that the pupils' diversity is taken into account during the lectures. After bringing up topics related to multiculturalism and diversity, the teacher notices an influence on the children's curiosity and openness towards it.

(32) Yes, the children are educated in a way to be open and appreciating to multiculturalism, according to the teacher.

(33) Morning ritual to get the day started, fare-well rituals in first grades, rituals during class, collective cleaning up or rituals where one has to stay silent.

(34) The teacher thinks that the school plays a strong role in the integration process of children.

(35) All aspects to be evaluated were seen to be "very important" for the integration process of refugee children.

(36) The teacher thinks that a heterogeneous classroom environment benefits refugee children best.

The teacher does not think that some children benefit from homogeneity but rather that all children benefit from the heterogeneity.

(37) The teacher informs herself about the children's personal background in conversations – with the children and, if possible, also with the parents.

(38) The teacher would assess her current state of knowledge about teaching and caring for refugees as “good” – but to be expendable, of course. She stresses “by now” they are good. (implication that this was not always the case).

(39) The biggest challenge, according to the teacher, is the language barrier. She believes that issues with concentration difficulties or behavioral disorders etc may be the case in “hard core” refugee cases but so far she didn't experience such problems.

(40) For her school, the teacher would ask for additional teaching staff, or in general people who can also be around during the lectures in order to support and help the refugee children.

(41) She believes that this is a mutual adaptation process. The school has to adapt to the language demands and requirements, language barriers have to be overcome and cultural differences have to be taken into account. Refugees have to do the same in order to settle in their new home. Establishing together.

(42) All-day school's influence: big! The program exceeds the teaching classical schooling context. Many benefit from those offers, also linguistically, by playing. A useful addition to the lectures and time inside the classroom.

## Summary of answered questions from questionnaire: School 3 – German as a Second/ Foreign Language teacher

Questionnaire received on: 10.06.2016

(1) The teacher studied the subject “German” during her studies and was further educated during her time in clerkship. Currently she attends an additional course for obtaining a “DaZ” (German as a Second Language) certificate from the Goethe Institute.

(2) The teacher speaks German, English, Spanish and learnt Latin.

(3) She teaches one group of students in the course category “German as Foreign language” (DiF) and one in the course category “German as additional language” (DaZ).

(4) Each group consists of six pupils.

(5) The teacher's DiF course takes place five times a week and adds up to 6 hours. DiF classes are 2 times per week which results in 3 hours per week.

(6&7) The German skills within the course group varies a lot: children may only know a couple of words, while others are able to produce entire texts.

(8) The teacher currently teaches only children who already obtained basic German skills. Pupils who don't speak any German yet, are in another DiF group at her school.

(9) Non-verbal teaching methods are regularly used in her classes. She articulates with mimic, gestures and picture cards, etc.

(10) The teacher achieves best learning results by repetitively repetitions, references to examples in everyday life, movements, games, joyful activities that enhance the joy for learning, and by allowing the children to teach each other.

(11) All of the children in the teacher's groups seem to be very motivated.

(12) The children who speak the same mother tongue make regularly use of it in order to communicate with each other. But the teacher also explained to the children that for learning German, they have to talk in German a lot. Sometimes, however, she deliberately also asks children who speak the same language to explain something. The teacher herself is interested in the pupils' mother tongues and constantly learns from her pupils.

(13) First associations with the term "refugee child" include: motivated, very young, for knowledge striving children who have already experienced a lot.

(14) Regarding the aspects ability to learn, participation in and getting used to the group, contact with teacher and contact with peers, the teacher does not notice a difference between children with and without refugee background. What the teacher did, indeed, notice one needs to keep a potential flight of some pupils in mind when choosing the topics for the lessons. The topic "family" is often emotionally occupied and not suitable for the lesson.

(15) The teacher needs more background knowledge about the refugee children and their story for teaching more successfully.

(16) Information about the children and their experiences received the teacher usually from the pupils' class teacher or the principal.

(17) Currently, the teacher is satisfied with her knowledge about teaching and caring for refugee children. Nonetheless, she likes to attend more trainings and seminars in order to be informed about recent insights which can be implemented and taken into account in the lectures. In addition, she refers to the useful and helpful information exchange with her colleagues.

(18) Some of the biggest challenges with regard to teaching and caring for refugee children are, for the teacher, a sensitive approach to potential traumata, communication with the parents (e.g. about time

schedules etc.) and communication with regard to emergency situations (fire alarm etc;)

(19) In her opinion the school would need more information about the children's background and maybe psychological care and treatment.

(20) The teacher believes that being involved in the integration process is a duty of the school, in the first place. Followed by the responsibility of the parents: they have to make sure that the children come to class, are equipped with materials and food and are picked up from school after the classes are over.

[(21) - ]

(22) The school is eager to foster the integration process, according to the teacher. She refers to the system of distributing the children in regular classes rather than teaching them collectively in a welcome or refugee class.

(23) Options a,b,d and e are regarded to be very important. Option c important (support emotional and social development). And option f rather important (acquiring knowledge)

(24) a) The teacher thinks that a mixture of native children and children with migration or foreign background is important for refugee children. The children with foreign or migration background serve an already existing climate of acceptance of diversity. The teacher believes that this may facilitate the integration process of refugee children.

## SCHOOL 4

### Summary of the interview at school 4: Principal

Interview conducted: 13.06.2016

- (1) The interviewee is a temporary principal, together with a colleague of hers, since 2014.
- (2) Currently, they have 204 pupils at her school.
- (3) Pupils have Portuguese (large group), Syrian (large group as well), Pakistani, Polish, Albanian, Dutch, Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Russian nationalities.
- (4) The share of pupils with migration background lays around one third.
- (5) Currently, ten teachers are employed at the school of whom none have a migration or foreign background (6).
- (7) Teaching German as a second language (DaZ) is done by almost all teachers. One colleague is especially responsible for teaching DaZ in the Welcoming class which consists of all the refugee children and which was established in February 2016.
- (8) The school doesn't teach non- Germans in their mother tongue and also doesn't have any teachers who could do so. Usually, when there is the need to translate into a particular language, it has to be called an interpreter in, for example other parents who speak the same language and who reside in German already long enough to be able to translate between the two parties.
- (9) The principal pointed out that it is especially the Arabic language(s) which causes troubles for the school. A majority of refugee children speaks this language and confronts the school with a big challenge. In this context,

the school would really need a teacher who is able to speak and understand Arabic and who could also attend meetings with parents. Otherwise, there is constantly the need to search for a translator.

(10) The school works closely together with the city's integration counseling office (which already exists for many years). The office is run by two persons who are, as representatives of the counseling authority, the school's major contact persons. All refugee families have to go to this authority first and afterwards, the children are distributed to the schools.

- a. Furthermore, the city also has an integration commissioner who can be consulted when additional information, for example, about the countries of origin is needed.
- b. Also refugee parents receive support from both institutions.
- c. Additionally, the school cooperates with the CARITAS and sport and cultural associations. The latter ones are especially relevant for the school's all-day program. When parents agree that their children take part in the all-day schooling option, they can attend the afternoon activities. The school attaches vast importance to accommodate the refugee children in the OGS (= *offene Ganztageschule* = "all-day school"). During the afternoon program, they receive additional DAZ classes by the nursery school teacher once a week.

(11) The school received the first seven refugee children in September 2015. They came from Macedonia, Albania and Syria. By now, the school teaches 20 refugees, including Iranian and Iraqi children.

(12) The principal's first associations with the term "refugee child" is pity, consternation and the wish to help.

(13) When refugee families initially lived in shared refugee accommodation, the school had the contact data from the responsible persons in the shared refugee accommodation. Many of the arrivals also stayed in the city and those are the major target for integration of the school. All schools in the city were asked to educate teachers to teach DaZ and to ask for the respective teaching hours at the school authority. The interviewed school and one other

school complied with the request but only the interviewed school actually accepted refugee children so far.

(16) With regard to the freedom related to structuring the lessons with refugee children, the teacher said that this is somewhat difficult due to the dependence on limited materials which they received from an educational publisher.

The teacher in the welcoming class is assisted by an intern of the school. When there were only 7 pupils with refugee background, they were distributed to the regular classes where they spent the entire morning and no welcoming class was established yet. With a growing number of refugee children though, the additional welcoming class was introduced in February 2016. From Tuesday to Friday they are taught 3 hours in this separate class of refugee children and join the regular lessons in their classes for the remaining day. Depending on how fast the children learn and get used to the setting, they may also spend less time in the welcoming classes and more hours in the regular ones. On Monday, when the DaZ welcoming class is absent, all children spend the entire day in their regular classes.

(16 & 17) Differentiated teaching methods: in March 2016 the district government compiled teaching materials which were said to be suitable for teaching refugee and migrant children. The school makes use of these materials which also include samples for mathematics and social science classes. The content includes units like greetings, school, numbers, etc. The teacher has less space to vary.

Staying in the welcoming class is limited and restricted to two years. For this reason, it is important that the children get to learn with peers in regular classes as soon as possible. The teachers observed that when the children in the welcoming class became too close, they started to “click together” and speak more Arabic with each other which hampers the progress of learning German. Furthermore, it is also challenging for the teacher to teach different age and ability groups at the same time which is another reason for the attempt to teach refugees as soon as possible in mainstream classes.

The welcoming class usually contains around twenty pupils – depending on the new arrivals and departures which often occur rather unforeseen. After

the summer break, five more children will join the welcoming class. Some of those are also siblings from the other refugee children.

(18) The youth welfare office managed to bring young children into kindergarten facilities. There, the children undergo a first examination by the school doctor. Some issues were found, for example the need for one girl to wear glasses. This medical examination resembles a preventive medical check-up. With regard to psychological aid, the school works together with CARITAS. Since school 4 does not have any social workers (mostly because the school is not considered to be a problem or high risk school), they are entitled to 20 counseling hours. Those hours are for example used to test children in terms of existing requirements and abilities. Sometimes, relatives who already live in the area or in the neighborhood can be invited and together with their help it is possible, in most

(19) Referring to psychological help is usually initiated by the teacher or carer who notices problems first. The principal does not believe, however, that they have heavily traumatized pupils.

One of the reasons why they may be in relatively stable conditions could be that the refugee accommodation centers contacted the schools very early whether the refugee children could be accommodated in the schools in order to leave the dominantly adult environment. When the parents agreed, these refugee children were also immediately taken into the OGS program which allowed them to stay at school until the late afternoon. As soon as the families have their own flat or house, the living situation improves of course. Older houses in the surrounding of the school were provided and families could move in and start to live their family lives again.

The principal already visited some of those families in their new home and stated that they are doing quite well. With regard to psychological disorders, she said that she sometimes recognizes some jittery behavior and the one or other fights also occur every once in a while but her overall impression is that the children are pretty happy around.

(20) Social bridges: The school established a parents' café. Since March, parents can meet up once a week for around an hour. There is no pressure to participate and it is also not especially or only directed at the refugee topic

but to talk and exchange about rather general topics and to get in touch with each other. During one of the last meetings, one refugee mother joined as well which the principal regarded as a little success. At the same time, she stresses that without inviting and promoting the parents' café, it doesn't work yet.

Specific mentoring systems for newly arrived pupils in the class communities are not in place but the teachers at school 4 made the experience that there are always a couple of children who are interested in caring for the new refugee classmates. For boys, the physical education classes are of advantage because they can earn respect with their achievements. (example of one boy who had a tough start but could receive a lot of support through the physical education classes)

(21) The principal is already familiar with parental and residential skepticism towards a higher share of foreigner due to her past at another school in North-Rhine Westphalia. The interviewed school in particular was about to be closed in 2014 which was one of the reasons why the school personnel were a bit concerned when they started to teach refugees: they didn't know whether enough parents would still send their children to their school, especially because another school in the district actively promotes with its "refugee-free" schooling environment.

School 4's team try to assure that the new children really get used to the school system and that they belong to the school community. Parents can bring along their children (who don't attend the OGS offers) to the parents 'café meetings which still enables them to play with the children who attend the all-day school activities and spend time with the others.

(23) Since 2008, the school has a special certificate which stresses the school's cultural openness and education which was also one of the reasons why the school authority approached school 4 to ask for help regarding the accommodation and teaching of refugee children. And indeed, the certificate's content is represented in the way the school acts and the

underlying values can thus be regarded as school ethos. Also, the school has a school song.

(29) The school's last feast was a „feast of cultures“. Parents from international children, who lived at that moment already a bit longer in German, brought along traditional snacks and meals and the event was a real success.

(24&25) Racism and Discrimination aspects: the long-established residents of the city district are the most skeptical ones. A picturing guideline for being accepted in such a city district, is, according to the principal, the sentence: one has to know each other and one has to be seen on the street.

The major of a neighboring city said the following (which the principal agrees with): there is no use in having thousands of refugees in a small city. Rather, one should allocate smaller groups. This enables that refugees and native residents get to know each other, one lives next-door and can consequently also establish successful integration measures.

Obviously, not all refugees want to keep living in the particular city district and move to other places. But the school pays especially attention to those families who want to settle. Here, a lot of effort was and still is put in integrating them. Of some, one already knows other children who are going to attend the same school as their older siblings. With families' children who are very likely to stay it is even stronger tried to integrate them into mainstream classes in order to get to know each other and to know with whom one is dealing.

Actively getting to know each other, calls the principal the school's approach. One time, the entire class accompanied a kid to its home (since it was located close to the school building) because it was ill. Those things are minor actions but nevertheless important. One experienced that one has to go into the offensive. The school wants to tackle the skepticism which it certainly experiences.

(26) The parents' café, the feast of cultures are good occasions to confront people who hold rejecting attitudes but when individual families are



concerned, they will be approached and confronted separately. One tries to present their worries in a realistic light.

(28) Newcomer and refugee children are familiarized with the school and the school system by actively participating from the day they arrive at the school.

Also, parents bring their children in the morning and all children who attend the all-school program need to be picked up in the afternoon as well. By this means parents can also throw a glance at each other and get to know one another. Also, it is easier for the care and teaching personnel to get to know the parents. Once more, the principal stressed the importance of the OGS. One of the nursery personnel recently started to learn Arabic in order to foster a closer relation to the newly arrived refugee children and their parents.

The principal herself is interested in learning expressions and phrases in the children's mother tongues.

(29) Sometimes, it coincidentally happens that children bring up themselves the topics which they are currently interested in. The principal talked about a situation in which the children presented and compared letters from their languages: Chinese, Russia, Arabic and Turkish. Afterwards they wrote words in the different languages. This was an example of a spontaneous situation where the pupils can easily bring in their cultures.

(30) The principal says that the school teaches the children to be attentive towards other cultures. It is a mutual process of getting to know each other. The new children learn about the German culture but, in return, the teachers and peers get an insight into the refugee children's culture.

(31) With regard to routines, it is mostly up to the individual class teachers. A greeting routine in the morning is common. The principal told about the routine which she followed in her first grade: first, they welcomed each other, then the attending pupils were counted, afterwards it was asked for the well-

being in different languages. Even though those children are now in the third grade, they still want to hold on to those routines in the mornings.

(32) School 4's principal thinks that the school's influence on the integration process of refugee children starts with the willingness to accept them in the school. This acceptance at school also allowed the families to receive living space in the district which enabled them to get out of the shared refugee accommodation.

(33) The principle regards aspect a to be very important.

B: very important

C: very important

D: very important (that was also one of the reason why the refugee accommodations have asked the schools for help: schooling means getting back a routine, getting up in the morning, having a structured day, those are things which were missing during the flight. Also elements like being on time, getting school things ready and so forth.)

Here, the principal mentioned how well equipped the majority of refugee children come to school. She sees how much value the parents attach to the education. Also, all the refugee children at school 4 come to school, nicely dressed and clean. The families also pay a lot of attention to the outer appearance. This attitude stems from the families themselves, it is not like the school move up to the parents about such issue.

(important) side remark by the principal: the inhabitants of the city district know that other parts of the city deal with many foreigners. This is not the case for the particular district and the residents value and want to remain this distinction. They really want to keep the picturing difference.

E: fast language acquisition is paramount.

F: The principal mentioned the difficulties of several parents with migration or refugee background to talk with their children in proper and flawless German, therefore the principal would prefer if the children get in touch with their mother tongue at home, including knowledge acquisition (as far as the

parents know about the content) and leave the German learning process up to the public education institution, the school. The principal fears that, if parents aim to use German as language of instruction and to pass on knowledge, they cannot express themselves which results in loss of knowledge.

(34) The interviewee sees advantages in both: teaching pupils in homogenous or heterogeneous classrooms.

One of her pupils was the only one who spoke Portuguese in his class meaning that he had no one with whom he could talk in his mother tongue. Consequently, he learned German really fast.

On the other hand, those children who experienced the settling process or the process of learning a new language themselves (or know about it from their parents or grandparents) can be a good help as well. They feel with the refugee children and can even better comprehend what they have to go through. They may know how it is if one can only communicate via phone with the relatives in the other country. There are certain things which children with migration and refugee background have in common.

However, like the principal already mentioned before, a density of pupils with the same origin and language can deduce the integration and language learning process. In the case of the many Arabic children in the welcoming class, a solution had to be found.

(35) Mostly the collection of background information about the refugee children happens over the contact with the counseling office.

(36) Her knowledge level assesses the principal as 50:50.

(37) The biggest challenge related to teaching refugee children is in her perception the situation if dealing with a child displaying behavioral problems but has limitations to communicate it. The language barrier makes such problems even more severe.

(38) The principal would like to have an increased public relations work – with regard to the promotion of the newly established parents' café. Additional personnel is necessary as well. Due to the accommodation of

refugee children rise the classroom sized from around 23 pupils to 28,29 children. One class which started off with 26 in grade 1 has by now 36 pupils and can finally be separated. This is the result of a fight with the authorities and was not self-evident.

Furthermore, materials for the regular classes are needed. Apart from the welcoming classes it is only worked with the standard German materials.

In the welcoming class, it is made use of the recommended materials from the education publishers (with many pictures and build up like the typical materials for learning a foreign language).

Interestingly, children with refugee background are doing very well in mathematics and even outperform some of their native classmates.

School 4's principal states that the motivation and the ambition is noticeable. A lot of it stems from the parents. They set high hopes in their children. In some regards they are also dependent on their children, for example if the children have to translate between public offices and their parents (from grade 4, they are often taken along to such appointments).

Regarding further translation means: most refugee families search a family who speak and understand their language but live already longer in Germany. They ask those acquaintances to accompany them to meetings at school and assist them with the translations. By now, the daughter speaks German good enough to translate for her father. The principal admits that they really hope that the girl indeed understands and translates everything correctly.

The city published a „school guide“, which was translated in common languages represented in the city; This guide includes the most important information.

Currently, the most effective translation mean is an electronic one, explains the principal. The school personnel write down the content in German and the refugee parents enter the text in their device in a translation program which displays the translation in their mother tongue. The principal also stresses the importance of information exchange and mutual support.

At parents' counseling days, some parents organize their own interpreter whom they bring along. One family contacted the city and could acquire a translator to bring along.

(39) It is a "give and take". It helps the children with the integration process of the school makes clear what is expected from them. This refers back to the need for clarity, predictability and structure. Also, this may strengthen the will to adapt to the new environment. On the other hand, one has to keep in mind what kind of situation this is for them and what oneself would like to experience in such a position. It really is a give and take according to the principal.

When parents know about a meeting, appointment or event which is about their children, then they really show up.

(13) It is usually more the children with migration background who hold skeptical attitudes against the refugees. It is less the Germans. Migrant children fear a concurrence situation and fear that they lose the attention and the support because of the newly arrived families. Among the migrant children there is lately also a striving for higher secondary schools and they simply fear that something is going to be taken away from them. A native German child with a mother who receives social benefits told openly and honestly to one nursery educator that he is afraid of missing out.

Some of the migrants fear that one forgets about them and their needs. Many still really found their position in society and struggle for their status. Additionally, natives who are not doing so well themselves also fear the concurrence through the refugees.

## Summary of answered questions from questionnaire: School 4 – Teacher for German as a Second/ Foreign Language

Questionnaire received on: 19.06.2016

(1) As primary and secondary school she teacher followed several DaZ (=German as a Second Language) trainings. Furthermore, she already taught DaZ for several years already.

(2) The teacher speaks German as her mother tongue, Dutch and learned English and French during high school.

(3) The teacher teaches grades 2 to 4 in Dutch and fourth grade pupils in Music and Art. In addition, she teaches the refugee welcoming class from Tuesday to Friday. On Thursday the lesson lasts three hours, on the other days two hours.

(4) In her regular classes, the teacher has between 24 to 28 children. The refugee class consists of 20 pupils. The number is not consistent, however, because refugee children come and go rather frequently.

(5) Referring back to question/ answer 3.

(6) Most of the children don't have any prior knowledge in German. Four children are already able to construct simple sentences because they attended another German school beforehand. Some children know few German words and are able to answer easy questions to which one can answer in easy one-sentence phrases.

(7) The teacher differentiates three times: 1) for those children who have neither any prior German knowledge nor being literate 2) for the children with limited German skills 3) for those children who can already talk in short sentences

(8) a) The teacher works a lot with "*Erzählbildern*" (=pictures that tell stories), with picture-and wordcards, with simple games (for example domino, memory, bingos, dice games, and card games).

Furthermore, the teacher designed a letter booklet for each letter and for each topic which was covered in class.

For the children who don't have any prior knowledge, the school organizes a pre-course for the alphabetization and writing learn process as well as a "*Ziffernschreibkurs*" in order to get to know numbers. In this course the children can mostly work independently. If children don't understand the task, she asks children who are already understand German better, to translate in the mother tongue what the exercise is about. Usually this works well, according to the teacher.

b) Sometimes the teacher asks how certain words or phrases are phrased in the children's mother tongues. In other occasions, the children tell the teacher without being asked to do so. The teacher tries to repeat the words or phrases and to make use of them at another, fitting occasion.

(9) The teacher works a lot with gestures and mimic and materials including pictures. Non-verbal materials are not purchased by the school.

(10) The content of the previous lessons is repeatedly being repeated in different manners. Especially competitive games are appreciated by the children.

(11) Most of the refugee children are highly motivated and grateful for the support to learn the German language. So far only one child stated that it would prefer to speak Arabic and doesn't want to learn German.

(12) In the refugee welcoming class, the pupils speak eight different languages (Syrian, Dutch, Albanian, Macedonian, Iraqi, Portuguese, Afghan and Kurdish). Consequently, taking into account the mother tongues is only possible to a limited extent. During the lesson one speaks mostly German. Sometimes the children speak in their mother tongues which bothers some other children. The majority of children wishes that one really sticks to German during the welcoming class lessons or pre-course lessons.

(13) -No response-

(14) a)

(i) The teacher sees no differences between children with and without refugee background with regard to their ability to learn. (ii) Being and arriving on time and a regular course participation is not self-evident. (iii) The teachers notices that children with refugee background tend to be very fond of and need affection from her as a teacher a lot more. (iv) With regard to the contact to other children, the teacher does not see any difference.

b) What she regards as being important when teaching refugee children is the class size. The group should not be too large in order to ensure that each child gets enough attention and support. The teacher would wish for a maximum size of 10 children.

c) The teacher definitely realizes that experiences from the past affect the ability to learn. It is harder for the teacher to establish a trustful relationship to children with refugee background. They tend to be distracted by their thoughts and cannot follow the lecture at all times. Furthermore, they tend to aggressive behavior. The teacher mentions that a psychological treatment for the children as well as for their parents would be of great help.

(15) What the teacher would need for a more successful teaching: she is in need for an own classroom where teaching materials can be better spread out and left for the next session. Currently, the teacher and the welcome class are located inside the library.

The group should not be bigger than ten children in order to have sufficient time for all individuals. The teacher would need more teaching material for a more differentiated teaching. Sometimes an interpreter is necessary in order to talk to the children's parents. Furthermore, the teacher would wish for a psychological or social pedagogical supervision and care for traumatized children or children displaying behavioral problems.

(16) With regard to ways by which the teacher informs herself about the background of refugee children, the teacher mentions booklets from educational publishers with which one can inform oneself about the backgrounds of refugee children. Moreover, there are offered trainings.

Recently, the teacher went to a training which dealt with the topic “Trauma and traumatized refugee children”.

(17) The teacher states that she would like to increase her knowledge about refugee children. Because of that she strives for attending and participating in more training events. Especially with regard to children without prior German skills, the teacher is little experienced yet.

(18) The teacher sees one of the biggest challenges in the heterogeneity of the children. They stem from a variety of different countries with differing cultural backgrounds and often hold a mentality and attitude towards life which is also different from the ones of us Europeans. Also, the children in the welcome/ preparation class are between six and ten years old and vary in their educational level. For her, as an individual teacher in the groups, it is really difficult to fulfill the numerous learning needs. Another aspect which impedes the teaching process is the constant coming and going of refugee children. If, in another city, accommodation is found for the refugees, they leave again. On the other hands, new families come and new children join the class.

(19) School 4 would need following elements, according to the teacher, in order to be able to teach and educate refugee children more successfully: an own classroom, a social pedagogue, an interpreter, a second teacher for team-teaching hours, materials for differentiated lessons, teaching games suitable for different language skills level, computer exercises on the computer and the online listening exercises, as well as more exercise notebooks for individual working.

(20) The teacher believes that it is a mutual give and take process between the school and the refugee pupils. On the one hand, the teachers should give the children the feeling of being welcomed and support them with everything they've got with the learning process. The material and personnel equipment needs to be sufficiently provided. Also, the school has to dispose of enough qualified teachers and teaching staff and provide enough materials for learning the language German. Differentiated teaching materials are necessary because of the differing language levels. Refugee children need to be encouraged by parents, relatives or others who speak

sufficiently German to practice, speak a lot in German and do their homework. Children have a positive basic setting/ attitude towards foreign languages and are ready to give their very best in the learning process.

(21) After the general greeting, the group sings a good-morning-song and afterwards the subject matter from the day before is repeated in a playful manner. Then, the children sit in a circle and talk about the prior day or about a “*Erzählbild*” (descriptive picture). The teacher introduces the new subjects and at the end of the session, the children sing a farewell song.

(22) The teacher was asked to which extent the school is responsible for refugee children's integration success. The school management agreed to accept refugee children. To some extent the school purchases teaching materials. However, materials are also purchased by the teacher herself. The class teachers from refugee children's regular class teachers also provide the children with differentiated exercises and tasks.

(23) Options 1-e were considered to be very important roles of the school in the integration process. Option f, providing extensive knowledge, was evaluated to be important.

(24) According to the teacher, it is rather an advantage to enter a heterogeneous class with native and foreign children. The children feel immediately more comfortable because they are not the only ones who deal with difficult starting situations. Related to the saying: A problem shared is a problem halved. Another advantage of being in a multicultural classroom is for the refugee children the fact that they can ask for advice or help in their mother tongue to children who are already longer at the school. This creates a climate of security and being accepted and helps to reduce prejudices and fears.

Those refugee children who are taught in a homogenous classroom have to adapt faster to the school's environment. They may feel the pressure to learn German more quickly in order to become an equal member of the class.

The teacher thinks that anxious and less confident children who experienced many hard situations on the run benefit more from a

heterogonous classroom. The other children with foreign or migration or refugee background can help them to adapt and get used to the new everyday life and the school routine surroundings more quickly because they may have been in the same situation not too long ago. Furthermore, they are connected via the same language and culture. The new refugee children can inform themselves in their mother tongue. This provides feelings of safety and reduces fears.